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ABSTRACT

This document presents 10 case studies of adult community education programs (ACE) in the state of Victoria, Australia, in the mid 1990s, that were identified as exemplifying the following principles of good practice in ACE: expansiveness, integration, responsiveness, innovation, belonging, explicitness, autonomy, accessibility, synthesis, and coordination. The courses profiled represent a broad cross-section of subject areas (child care, prevocational education, furniture restoration, small business development for women, Koori Art, literacy and community decision making, women's issues, tourism, applied sport psychology, and horticulture) and formats (including formal part-time and full-time courses, discussion groups, workshops, courses that use community resources rather than textbooks, courses taught primarily by one instructor, and courses taught by a series of different instructors). Each profile contains information about some/all of the following aspects of the program: history; educational characteristics (philosophy, aims, development stage, length, delivery mode, prerequisites, content and methodology, competencies/expected learning outcomes, assessment criteria/methods, reporting/certification, accreditation status, pathways); good practice criteria; student characteristics; and administration and resources. Appended are the following: discussion of criteria for identifying good practice in adult education; range/spread/mix of case studies matrix; list of principles used to select case studies; and acknowledgements. Contains 47 references. (MN)

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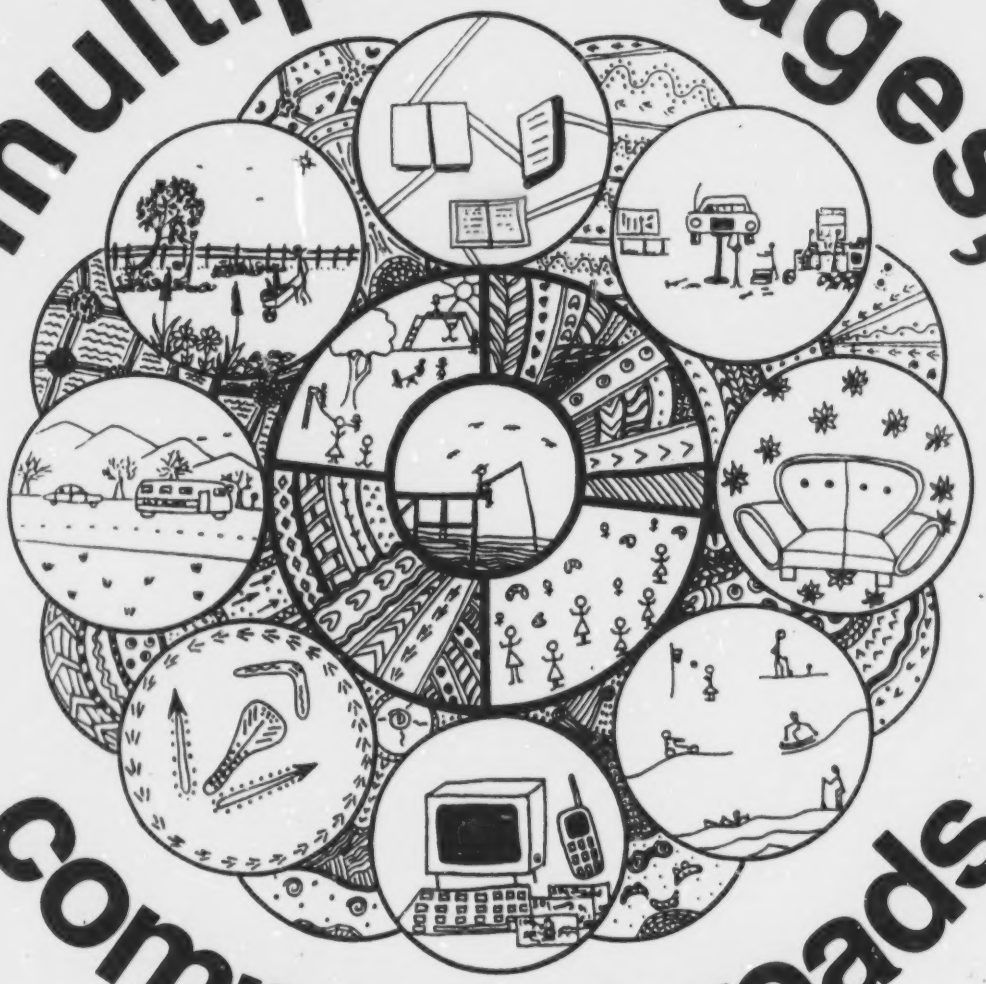
multiple images, common threads



case studies of good practice in adult community education

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Multiple Images, Common Threads

Case Studies of Good Practice in Adult Community Education

Delia Bradshaw

Adult Education in the Community

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Reflections on Representations - An Introduction

Multiple Images, Common Threads is a collection of ten short stories, real life stories, about adult education in the community in Victoria in the mid 1990's. These stories offer everything short stories usually do - local colour, plenty of drama and a host of fascinating characters. They are not the only stories to be told about adult education, but they are ten very good ones.

Diversity and difference

At first glance, it may be their diversity and difference which is most striking about these stories. They are set in different geographical locations around Victoria - in the countryside, in inner-city Melbourne, on the outskirts of Melbourne, on the seashore, in regional towns. The drama comes through each story's unique and innovative response to the special adult education and training needs of its local community. They span course areas as varied as horticulture, furniture restoration, small business development for women, child care, advocacy, cultural heritage, women's issues, tourism and sport psychology.

As for the characters in these stories, because each course has been tailor-made to meet the needs of a particular population of adult learners, this collection portrays a wide range of Victorian adult educators and learners at work in the community. The collection can be thought of as a gallery featuring ten singular group portraits. Each portrait represents a unique mix of socio-economic, cultural, educational and occupational backgrounds, with ages ranging from 15 to 75. There are women-only groups and mixed gender groups. There are groups specifically for those with no employment history and groups for those retraining. While each has a clear subject focus, the group participants are as diverse as Victoria itself.

Commonalities

So, although on the surface these stories or portraits may appear very different, a closer look reveals that they share a great deal - common histories, common values, common issues, common visions, common dilemmas and common resolutions. It is no exaggeration to say that whilst they look different, and each one is novel and distinctive, that they all share common preoccupations of the most fundamental importance. As the end of the twentieth century approaches, they implicitly ask us, just what exactly and precisely is the nature, the role and the future of adult education in the community (ACE) sector? In other words, each story invites us to respond to two key questions. What is the special and essential contribution the ACE sector can make? How, in a time of scarcity and tough accounting, is ACE to be most aptly justified - educationally, philosophically, ethically and politically?

These stories contain answers to these burning questions. They make a powerful case not only for maintaining and strengthening adult education in the community sector now, but also for looking to it for solutions to pressing adult education and training problems. What, in fact, these stories are saying is: "Here is an effective and exemplary education and training model for the future". It is therefore of widespread significance to make their implicit answers explicit.

It is the purpose of this introduction to do just that.

Project background

Before proceeding to elaborate on these tantalising questions and answers, some background information on the project which produced these stories will provide a context for the analysis later in this introduction.

The Good Practice Curriculum Project, funded by the Victorian Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFEB) to be managed by the Adult Basic Education Resource and Information Service (ARIS), began in late 1994. A project reference group and part-time project officer were appointed shortly after. (See Appendix E.) The project objectives, as stated in the ACFEB project brief, were to:

- collect and write up examples of good practice curricula used in the adult and community education sector in community based providers;
- assist and encourage people in the adult and community education sector to share their curriculum;
- provide resources to the Adult, Community and Further Education Board for appropriate dissemination.

To achieve this third objective, it was specified that there be 10 examples covering a range of adult education programs.

From the outset, the project team considered that the project had to be specific as to what it meant by "good practice". The first task of the project officer was to write a paper on this subject. The paper, "Criteria for Good Practice Adult Education Practice", sketched clusters and patterns of good practice rather than drawing up an absolutist, decontextualised checklist. (See Appendix A.) This paper was not written to provide an easy-to-use mechanistic tool for selecting or eliminating courses to be included in the final publication. Rather it was an efficient way of summarising the latest thinking, both in Australia and overseas, on the matter of good practice in adult and community education. As a consequence, it also provided a sound touchstone for locating the courses that would be recommended by the reference committee.

How the ten adult education courses presented in this publication were chosen needs explanation.

Selection of case studies

At the first reference committee meeting, it was agreed that it was extremely important that there be a wide range of adult and community education courses represented in the project. In response, the project officer devised a matrix to guarantee that no significant and representative aspects would be overlooked. This matrix included variables such as learner populations, course types, program modes and accreditation status. (See Appendix B.) A little later on, to refine the selection process further, a set of organising principles was developed to capture more subtle aspects of the educational range and scope in adult and community education. It covered such matters as course frequency and intensity, formality of documentation, types of accountability, the life stage of the learners in the group, the purpose of the course, and the breadth and depth of subject matter. (See Appendix C.) This second lot of variables was integrated into the first matrix, thus making it a much more comprehensive map of the field.

Each reference committee member was then asked to nominate several examples of adult education courses in the community they believed were

embodiments of good practice. Once the project officer had completed some initial research on these nominations, in order to gather supporting evidence for the designated good practice suggestions, all the recommendations were plotted on the enlarged matrix to see if the broad spread of adult and community education activity was fairly well covered. Because this mapping exercise simply and dramatically revealed where there were clusters and where there were gaps, it facilitated the making of an interim list of eligible case studies based on these two requirements of good practice and representativeness. Further committee discussion added two extra criteria for assisting the choice process. Research on these two matters that are described in the next paragraph lead to the choice of the final ten.

First, the course had to have been evaluated. That is, it had to be a "tried and true" course that had been run a number of times: it could not be in the planning or just emerging stage. Second, preference was to be given to courses not published or publicised elsewhere in the public domain. For example, ACFEB has funded two projects to document Competency-Based Training (CBT) courses in the adult and community education sector. They are the "Development of Existing Courses According to CBT Guidelines for Accreditation" Project (managed by the Colac Adult Education Group) and the "Curriculum Writing: Documentation of curriculum in competency-based terms for further education courses conducted in community based providers" Project (managed by Western Region Council of ACFE).The project committee preferred to refer readers of this project to these two complementary curriculum projects rather than replicate by covering the same ground.

Once all the eligibility criteria had been finalised, the sifting process began. This sifting through the recommended courses for variety, for maturity and for quality, plus the affirmative action strategy favouring courses not widely known, produced the ten stories contained in this collection, **Multiple Images, Common Threads.**

Some very fine emerging curriculum initiatives could not, regrettably, be included because they fell outside the eligibility criteria. Courses such as "Leadership Training for Rural Women" at Tallangatta Community Education Centre, the open learning style "Introducing Native Vegetation into Farm Management" at Kerang Learning Centre, the "Archie's Creek Youth Enterprise Centre" auspiced by the Wonthaggi Community Development and Learning Centre and the "Lean Cuisine" at Upper Yarra are all promising curriculum initiatives. Together they add more weight to one of the key findings of this project, that the adult and community education sector is developing courses of sophistication of the highest standards. As well, they testify eloquently to another key finding of this project, that new models of adult education and training are evolving. They are of direct relevance and value to everyone who is concerned about the quality of education and training models both today and in the future.

More will be said about the characteristics of these innovative models later in this introduction.

Documentation of case studies

Once the ten courses had been chosen, the project officer visited the practitioners involved. Meetings took up to a day, depending on distance, travel and other circumstances. As it was a high priority for the case studies to reflect the voice and ethos of each practitioner, each adult educator was asked whether

she or he wanted to write their own accounts or whether they wanted the project officer to do this on their behalf. All chose the latter option, knowing they would see and comment on the first draft account of their particular course. The quotation at the bottom of the cover page for each case study, actual words taken from conversations between the project worker and the people concerned, is placed in this prominent position to give the voice of the adult educator, the adult learner, pride of place.

A word needs to be said at this point about the format of these case studies and about why they were written in two parts.

Each case study opens with a real life story, a piece of narrative prose, designed to give something of the feeling and the flavour of the course. It is followed by a course profile, a ready-reference guide containing data of a more abbreviated, procedural type. The course profile conveys factual information succinctly and economically whereas the story evokes some of the passion and colour of the social context. Of course, each story in the collection is not the "whole story", but it does try to draw attention to what is especially noteworthy about that course. Unlike the standardised course profile, the stories vary considerably in content and focus. Their form is shaped by the people most directly responsible for the success of the course as well as by the culture, the history and setting of the course, and not by a pre-determined interview schedule or recording format.

It almost goes without saying that both accounts, the story account and the profile account, giving a view from quite different perspectives contribute quite different understandings. Either, on its own, would have been insufficient. Together, they go a long way towards doing justice to the complexity of adult education work.

Most of the terminology used in the Course Profile headings is self-explanatory but a few of the terms will benefit from clarification.

The expression "CBT/CBL Compatibility" in the course profile refers to the extent to which the course has been documented according to a systemic formula for describing curriculum such as the nationally agreed Australian Council for Training Curriculum (ACTRAC) Template for course documentation, in other words, how much it is expressed in formulaic Competency-Based Training (CBT) or Competency-Based Learning (CBL) terms.

Criteria of good practice

The "Good Practice Criteria" in the profile are a distillation, in short-hand form, of the good practice curriculum patterns referred to in the *Criteria for Good Practice Adult Education Curriculum* paper mentioned earlier in this introduction (Appendix A). They provide a map and a common vocabulary for locating and talking about each of the stories. All the case studies in this collection meet all of these "good practice criteria" to a greater or lesser degree. The ticks next to these criteria, assigned after the stories had been written up, serve, as any indicators on maps do, to point out features that are <u>especially</u> evident or prominent in that particular area of adult education.

A similar role is played by the keyword that is displayed on the cover page for each of the ten case studies. The keywords featured - expansiveness, innovation, synthesis, co-ordination, responsiveness, explicitness, integration, autonomy, accessibility and belonging - are also concepts that are present to a

greater or lesser degree in each course in this collection. Singling them out by assigning one to each case study serves to spotlight a particular curriculum strength in that course, highlighting the distinctive way in which the good practice ideas are expressed or embodied in that story. The keyword chosen for each course is thus a way not only of applauding a particular strength or virtue of that course but also of building a bridge between the more implicit values of the story and the more explicit values articulated in the good practice criteria.

Texture of the stories

In trying to define the good practice curriculum factors common to all these stories about adult education, the most significant observation to be made by an outsider may not be apparent to the people close to the action. The courses are intricately textured. There is no quick and easy way of describing this intricacy. They are **multi-purpose** in their aims - simultaneously embracing vocational, personal, intellectual, social, civic and cultural aims. They are **multi-discursive** and **multi-disciplinary** in approach and content - harmoniously integrating discourses associated with business, industry, the national training reform agenda, social justice, community development, the media, citizenship and personal growth; smoothly blending subject matter from a range of different disciplines such as economics, politics, literature, psychology, cultural studies, fine arts, sociology, information technology, mathematics and the sciences, including the health sciences. They are **multi-dimensional** or **multi-valent** in their understandings of discourses and disciplines - seamlessly interweaving saying, writing, doing, being, valuing and believing. They are **multi-faceted** in their methodology - giving equal attention and status to activities that contribute to skills development, language development, conceptual development, aesthetic development and ethical development; judiciously balancing student self-direction, group co-operativeness and teacher/tutor leadership and facilitation. They are **multi-form** in their outcomes- resulting in demonstrable achievements in skills, attitudes, behaviours and knowledge that are directly applicable to employment, further study, civic participation and family life.

Some inferences

Faced with this plenitude, such intricately textured adult education, what conclusions are to be drawn? One inference that springs to mind is that here is a significant adult education curriculum hybrid forming, a powerful new mix of ingredients that simultaneously fulfils personal, social, vocational, intellectual, civic and cultural aspirations. Here is curriculum that results in many-sided outcomes, without one perspective or agenda or focus dominating at the exclusion of all others. Even the simplest or most basic educational activity becomes an initiation into a complex and sophisticated world of ideas and cultures and practices. It is tempting to say that this is true "multi-skilling", truly value for money, truly "value-added" education.

Whilst these courses pride themselves on their breadth, it is important to stress their depth as well. These are not superficial courses for dilettantes, trying to be all things to all people. They are subject-rich and subject-deep. In different contexts, different weight is assigned to different purposes and their related desired outcomes. In each individual situation, different emphases and combinations of civic, intellectual, social, personal, vocational and cultural perspectives emerge as different contextual priorities and different foci are given precedence. Sometimes the vocational takes prominence, sometimes the intellectual. And so forth. What is remarkable, however, is that traces of each of

the six perspectives, purposes and outcomes are always present, if not always in equal measure.

This model has much to offer the whole education and training field as major changes sweep through most aspects of national and personal life, and the dangers, deficiencies and costs of narrow and rigid education and training approaches are more widely understood. The time is ripe for a powerful education and training model to emerge as sound and effective alternatives are being advocated and sought in a number of sectors of education. This move towards a more "integrated" curriculum is abundantly clear in many recent publications, and it is worth referring to some of these.

Broader context of adult education

A good starting point for this brief review of recent discussions on what makes for good practice in adult education and training is the Adult Community Education Working Party Lifelong Learning Reference, circulated for discussion in February, 1995. Its Issues Paper "Advice on Lifelong Learning Skills and Attitudes" sets the scene by stating that *"there is increasing pressure internationally to provide individuals and economies with the capacity and confidence to thrive in the face of rapid change by actively developing lifelong learning policies and practices"* (p.4). The Working Party defined the scope of its reference as *"to identify and describe those characteristics, structures and processes of education and training which encourage people to participate in and enable them to benefit from formal and informal learning throughout their lives"* (p.8). Two of the seven questions it formulated to focus discussion were:

"*1. What characterises lifelong learning skills and attitudes?*
2. What are the characteristics of adult community education that foster lifelong learning?" (p.2. Reference).

These Working Party questions are another way of asking the same questions that have been at the heart of this project's investigations, in its analysis of ten different adult education contexts to see what characterises good adult education. The ten case studies in this collection are living answers to the questions of national significance quoted above. The more abstract description of the attributes and activities of the ten case studies in this collection, their predisposition to be "multi" in so many ways, is an initial attempt to identify those learning skills, attitudes and outcomes that are indicators of good practice because they are of lifelong value.

Before proceeding to specify what else this project might contribute to the Working Party's Discussion, it is worth noting, as other reference points for this project's findings, how some other contemporary researchers and practitioners are answering these questions to do with what makes for effective adult education, education that continues to be meaningful long after a particular course has officially finished.

The Candy report, **Developing Lifelong Learners through Undergraduate Education**, a National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET) Commissioned report, a precursor to the Working Party Reference mentioned above, prefaces its profile of the effective lifelong learner by stressing the widespread relevance of its findings well beyond formal tertiary education. It says *"graduates have much the same learning needs as others in society at large.....part of this study has been an attempt to adduce some sort of profile of*

the qualities and attributes that are possessed by effective lifelong learners...to identify those aspects of learning competence applicable to all different sorts and contexts of postgraduate learning. On the basis of our study, including the submissions, the interviews, the readings, and our analysis of course documentation, we would suggest that the lifelong learner would exhibit the following qualities or characteristics to some degree:

** An inquiring mind - a love of learning; a sense of curiosity; a critical spirit; comprehension-monitoring and self-evaluation;*

** Helicopter vision - a sense of the interconnectedness of fields; an awareness of how knowledge is created in at least one field of study, and an understanding of the methodological and substantive limitations of that field; breadth of vision;*

** Information literacy- knowledge of major current resources available in at least one field of study; ability to frame researchable questions in at least one field of study; ability to locate, evaluate, manage and use information in a range of contexts; ability to retrieve information using a range of media; ability to decode information in a variety of forms: written, statistical, graphs, charts, diagrams and tables; critical evaluation of information;*

** A sense of personal agency - a positive concept of oneself as capable and autonomous; self-organisation skills (time management, goal-setting, etc);*

** A repertoire of learning skills - knowledge of one's own strengths, weaknesses and preferred learning style; range of strategies for learning in whatever context one finds oneself; an understanding of the differences between surface and deep level learning."* (pp 43-44).

The American adult educator Ira Shor, at the very beginning of his book **Empowering Education**, poses the following overarching questions, questions obviously very closely related to those raised by the other studies so far mentioned in this introduction: *"What kind of educational system do we have? What kind do we need? How do we get from one to the other? Can education develop students as critical thinkers, skilled workers and active citizens? Can it promote democracy and serve all students equally?"* (p. 11). Again, these are alternative ways of covering the research domain covered by this project. What does Shor conclude are indications of good practice?

He contextualises his answers to his own questions by saying: *"In the conservative climate and hard times of the 1980's and early 1990's, students learned to see themselves as individual careerists, not as social beings and world citizens whose future depended on co-operation, peace, ecology and equality"* (p. 73), making it quite clear that he believes it is the goal of adult education *"to relate personal growth to public life, by developing strong skills, academic knowledge, habits of inquiry and critical curiosity"* (p. 15). Like Philip Candy and colleagues, he is a strong advocate for students/learners developing a critical spirit. He describes his agenda of values for this empowering pedagogy as: *"Participatory; Affective; Problem-Posing; Situated; Multicultural; Dialogic; Desocialising (questioning social behaviours and experiences); Democratic; Researching; Interdisciplinary; and Activist"* (p. 17).

Issues of competency

Clare Burton, in the article "Equity and Competency Standards", part of a larger paper called "Equity Principles in Competency Standards Development and Implementation", puts her mind to the question of how to make competencies, in this case employment-related competencies, as comprehensive and holistic as possible. This is another version of the good practice quest, another attempt to determine what assures quality in education and training and what educational factors make the difference between short-term, limited, narrowly focused

effectiveness and long-term, transferable, broadly focused effectiveness. She cautions against focusing too narrowly when defining the concept of 'competency' because *"how the term is understood affects how competency standards are developed and it affects assessment arrangements and methods"* (p. 24). Her argument goes like this:

"If you believe competency assessment can be objective, then you are going to follow a well-known dictum, 'if you can't measure it, leave it out'. You are going to be focusing on clearly definable and tangible outputs, rather than on broader outcomes, and you are going to pick out of a performance the skills and knowledge requirements which can be observed in use. In the process you end up with an invalid set of standards, because you have ignored aspects of the results of performance that are critical, particularly from a quality point of view, and from a longer-term effectiveness point of view. What this view of competency - this view that you concentrate on the observable and measurable, leads to is
** a focus on discrete tasks*
** the exclusion of 'hard to measure' competencies*
** a focus on definable, tangible outputs."* (p. 27).

Burton's paper warns that the so-called 'soft' competencies, the higher level and harder-to-assess competencies, are ignored at our peril. More and more it seems, it is these very competencies, that are the ones that distinguish good practice. They are the ones mentioned by the Candy report, the ones mentioned by Shor and the ones identified as the key to deciphering the secret of success in each of the case studies in this collection.

Core values of learning

In a Conclusion to Janine Rizzetti's **More than Just Words: Good Practice in Literacy Provision in the Koorie Vocational Context,** a recent TAFE publication, Anne Bambrook also has an answer to questions about what adult education curriculum practices ensure the best educational outcomes. She says *"the 'secret' ingredient in Koorie learning situations rests with the quality of the relationships upon which the program is based....It may sound trite, and perhaps even heretical in a training milieu dominated by key performance indicators, activity measures, outputs and outcomes, to speak of those 'soft' words like humour, understanding, compassion and sincerity. This is not the language of the 90's and particularly not the language of the training reform agenda. And yet the values and human face of the training system are what Koories search for first in their learning experience. What flows with seeming ease from these core values are the content, the skills, the competencies and learning outcomes of a particular subject, module or course. But the core values come first....Good practice in Koorie programs is not solely about professional educational practice. It is about acquiring fundamental understandings."* (pp. 84-85).

This project, and the other studies cited, would say that Bambrook's analysis and her conclusions hold true for all adult education learners and settings and that, along with all the other forces identified as vital to the eco-system of 'good practice', the influence of certain human qualities must never be underestimated or forgotten.

Adult education as eco-system

It is fitting, given its complexity and diversity and inter-connectedness, to talk about adult education in the community as an eco-system. Musing on this apt

metaphor will provide an ideal way to bring attention back to the multiple images and common threads that make up the stories in this book, an ideal way to spot and focus on what really accounts for the sense of wellbeing radiating from these courses.

An eco-system is an environment in which all the elements, all the currents, all the influences interact in a dynamic and interdependent way. It is where diversity thrives, in fact, where diversity is essential for abundant life. This collection, and each story within it, are energetic micro-ecosystems, in which quite different forces, some might even say opposites, co-exist dynamically, harmoniously and co-operatively.

In each of these educational sites, theory and practice, talking and doing, general education and vocational education, the emotional and the rational, analysis and action, work and leisure, economic development and social development, hobby courses and work readiness are not seen as contesting, irreconcilable binaries. Quite the opposite. So-called polarities are not in competition but are supportively woven one into the other. They are sites where polarities, binaries, opposites are reconciled. Like any healthy eco-system, they are sites where this diversity of forms, forces and activities need to be present and active if life is to be sustained at its fullest.

In agriculture, it is conceded that monoculture is achieved at a very high cost to other life forms. In society, it is also recognised that monoculture, the domination of one life view and one life form over another, can only be achieved by relentless destruction. These adult education courses can be thought of as multiculturalism in its finest form, as flourishing socio-cultural eco-systems where learning dissolves boundaries and is not fenced in by the either/or choices of monoculture.

Trying to re-create these highly complex forms of life, either in writing or in educational practice, is no easy task. Different representations embody and point to different viewing positions and different values positions. This publication of true life curriculum stories features a variety of representations, thus providing a wide range of viewing positions for observing the emergence of new meanings in adult education. In the article "No Time for Nostalgia", Gunther Kress argues that *"a curriculum is a design for the future. It predicts and shapes the future of a society and its citizens."* (p. 12). The designs and patterns embodied in **Multiple Images, Common Threads** suggest that much of Victoria's future is shaping up well.

Expansiveness

INTRODUCTION TO CHILDCARE

Wingate Avenue Community Centre

"In order to have a life, you've got to have choices.
The more knowledge, the more choices, the greater the mileage."

15

"The more knowledge .... the greater the mileage"

EXPANSIVENESS is a word that springs immediately to mind when thinking of this Child Care course run in the midst of a public housing estate in the inner-city Melbourne suburb of Ascot Vale. It began 3 years ago as an 18-hour course, then spreading over 8 weeks and averaging 2 hours a week with a one day work placement. Since then, it has evolved into a course of over 150 hours, now spreading over 17 weeks and averaging 9 hours of classes per week with a two week work experience placement.

But it is not only the size of the course that has expanded. So have the scope and depth and complexity of its content and outcomes, as is clearly evident in the detailed curriculum documents prepared by the participating tutors.

The course came about in direct response to an immediate need in the Centre to provide a readily accessible, locally situated, childcare course for the staff in the Wingate Avenue Community Centre (WACC) Occasional Childcare Centre. Given the wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds represented by the women participants in the course, from the very beginning the group's multiculturalism has been seen as an educational asset providing unlimited learning opportunities.

This cultural diversity, and the broad range of knowledges and practices it embodies, has always been seen as a notable feature of the course. Certainly never a problem. And given the significance of developing English language skills as a course objective, it was decided that this aim would be best realised by incorporating, not denying, the womens' cultures. Storytelling was chosen as the most promising way to achieve this, and it has proven to be so.

The storytelling sessions, featuring lots of reading and talking, are placed early in the course to give the women students an immediate experience of speaking up and taking charge. Sometimes, women mime the stories that others are telling or reading. Sometimes, different groups of women are given the same illustration from a children's book, and asked to act out their own interpretations of that same picture. At other times, women perform stories, both in English and in their mother tongue, from their own childhoods. In the tradition of the best adult education principles and practices, this simple structure allows for an endless variety of purposes and achievements, resulting in women becoming stronger psychologically, culturally, linguistically, conceptually, artistically and vocationally. Not only is their cultural identity being affirmed, but they experience first-hand the value and power of storytelling for a diverse range of life and work situations.

This approach means that by the end of session six, only a third of the way through the course, they have expanded not only their repertoire of childcare skills but also their sense of self, their sense both of who they are and of who they might be. These early sessions provide a firm foundation for the Music, Movement, Art and Craft activities that follow, all of which embody and reinforce the same expectations and outcomes as the storytelling sessions.

Given the extent of the learning that is occurring, times for reflection and review are built into the course at regular intervals. This encourages the habit of automatically

evaluating attitudes, activities and services. It provides the opportunity to put questions, insights and understandings into words. It ensures an inextricable link between theory and practice, between action and reflection. Such rigour characterises the course from the very first day.

The first session in the course immerses the participants at once into the roles and thinking required of childcare workers. Firstly, the women are asked to draw, in groups of four, what they think a childcare centre looks like. Later, they are asked to design a menu and, finally, a week's program. Each group of four, the composition of which changes from task to task, presents and explains its proposal to the rest of the class. By the end of this 3-hour session, everyone has met everyone else, has worked with everyone else, has played a number of different roles, has made a presentation, and has well and truly begun her apprenticeship as a childcare worker. Later in the course, these same first-day proposals are re-visited, serving as a very effective measure of the womens' expanded knowledge and skills.

Vocational education and training of such a high standard is not something always associated with neighbourhood houses. In fact, trying to convince larger institutions that neighbourhood houses should be taken seriously as vocational and educational training centres takes a lot of the co-ordinator's time as she tries to gain access to the funds, the resources and the agencies traditionally associated with TAFE Colleges and universities. Yet, she sees it as imperative that she continues to make these links.

As of writing in April 1995, this course has not been accredited. The co-ordinator certainly sees course accreditation as an important future step, but not at any price. She is presently considering the various accreditation alternatives, looking for one that honours the course processes that have developed for a host of good reasons, looking for one that does not disable the course by dictating inappropriate criteria and formats, looking for one that does not curb its fluidity and expansiveness.

It was when discussing this matter that the co-ordinator exclaimed with some passion: "In order to have life, you've got to have choices. The more knowledge, the more choices, the greater the mileage." This could almost be the unwritten motto of this course. It has certainly opened up new horizons for its many women students, taking them further afield, both literally and metaphorically, than they've ever been since coming to Melbourne, enabling them to move into new communities, new courses and new jobs.

The special features of this Child Care course are well encapsulated in the concept of EXPANSIVENESS. This adult education course admirably demonstrates this aspect of Good Practice Curriculum in action because it:

- reaches wide in its commitment to include a wide range of cultural activities, styles and approaches
- embraces and attends to the wide range of expectations, emotions and experiences participants bring to class
- stretches each subject area to its fullest potential by incorporating language and literacy, cultural and vocational objectives into the whole curriculum and thereby achieving multi-faceted outcomes.

Educational Characteristics

Philosophy

The co-ordinator believes very strongly in learning English in context: hence her careful choice of both staff and activities that consciously incorporate English language development into every aspect of the curriculum. She gives storytelling a pivotal role in the curriculum not only because it strengthens English language skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as personal skills such as self-confidence, but also because it strengthens multiculturalism. Quite specifically, it encourages and enables the sharing and recording of stories from many different cultures.

Aims

To acquaint participants with:

- a full range of the skills and issues involved in the provision of childcare services
- the possibility of childcare as a profession or as an area of further study
- the opportunity to gain paid employment with the WACC Occasional Care Program, or somewhere similar

To provide a wide range of social and vocational contexts for developing participants' English language skills

To provide opportunities, via storytelling, music, movement, art and craft , for individuals to develop greater confidence and self-esteem

To enable participants to develop practical ways of preparing and presenting art/craft, music/movement and storytelling activities to children.

Development stage

As of April 1995, the course has run 5 times.

Length

17 weeks x 9 hours per week (over 3 days), plus 2 weeks' work experience placement.

Mode

Face-to-face: ✓
1:1:
Group: ✓
Distance:
Self-access:

Prerequisites

Survival English and an agreement to 80% attendance.

Content and Methodology

The 17-week course has 3 x 3 hour sessions per week, consisting of formal presentations, workshop sessions and field trips. Literacy support and multicultural perspectives are integrated into the curriculum throughout the duration of the course. Students' life experiences are drawn out and built on in all aspects of the curriculum.

The topics covered are:

Week 1: Course Outline; Storytelling 1; Designing a Safe Childcare Environment
Week 2: Storytelling 2; Guidelines and Regulations
Week 3: Excursions to observe Footscray TAFE and to visit Reverse Garbage; Storytelling 3; Daily Care and routines
Week 4: First Aid; Storytelling 4; Challenging Behaviour
Week 5: Art & Craft 1 (Introduction; Playdough); Storytelling 5; Ages & Stages
Week 6: Art & Craft 2 (Painting and Drawing); Storytelling 6; Multicultural Issues
Week 7: Art & Craft 3 (Sand, Water, Clay); Special Needs; Preschool Music 1 (Songs)
Week 8: Art & Craft 4 (Collage and Recycling); Resources for Childcare Workers; Preschool Music 2 (Percussion)
Week 9: Evaluation/Follow-up; Preschool Music 3 (Movement, Games, Folk Dancing and Music from Many Countries)
Week 10: Art & Craft 5 (Junk Toys and Recycling); Excursion to Prahran TAFE Multicultural Resource Centre; Preschool Music 4 (Planning A Music Session)
Week 11: Art & Craft 6 (Summary; Books and Resources); Preparation for Work Experience; Preschool Music 5 (Putting It All Together)
Weeks 12/13: Work Experience Placements
Week 14: Excursion to observe Lady Gowrie Childcare Centre; Review of Placements; Developing Multicultural Perspectives
Week 15: Creating Nurturing Environments 1; Review of Environment, Nutrition and Other Services; Follow-up of Students' Needs or Interests
Week 16: Creating Nurturing Environments 2; Job Search Skills, Further Education Options; Writing a CV
Week 17: Program Planning for Childcare; Evaluation of Course; Presentation of Certificates
Week 18: Assisted Access to Word Processing Facilities for Job Applications.

The Storytelling component, something unique to this course, develops students' English literacy abilities at the same time as modelling ways of introducing young children to stories and books. This includes using and practising simple storytelling crafts such as eye contact, repetition, movement and sound, varied vocal delivery and pacing, thus introducing participants first hand to an understanding of the importance of the non-verbal aspects of storytelling. In the process, whilst allowing students to practise previously unfamiliar behaviour such as addressing a group or acting out situations in a meaningful and safe context, it boosts their literacy abilities such as scanning, reading aloud, researching and finding a personal connection to a piece of literature.

In a similar way, the Art/Craft activities provide a variety of hands-on experiences to explore, experiment and be creative. Likewise, the Music and Movement activities, by providing first-hand experience in singing, folk dancing, movement, games, puppetry and playing musical instruments, widen each participant's repertoire of physical, psychological, social, cultural and vocational abilities.

Competencies/Expected Learning Outcomes

To demonstrate competence in:

- knowing the appropriate legal guidelines and regulations for childcare services

- providing a safe and nurturing childcare environment
- planning and organising a range of multicultural activities (eg storytelling, music, art and craft) for preschool children in childcare
- submitting job applications for childcare positions.

Assessment Criteria, Methods and Tasks

Students are assessed according to the specified expected learning outcomes and must successfully complete the following tasks:

- a test on the appropriate legal Guidelines and Regulations related to childcare services
- the preparation and presentation of an activities program
- the production of a well-presented job application, consisting of both a CV and a covering letter
- consistent contribution to the regular Course Review sessions
- satisfactory performance in the WACC playroom or other Workplace Placement.

Reporting and Certification

A WACC Certificate, detailing the topics covered and work experience undertaken, is presented to all who satisfactorily complete the course. This certificate, providing documentary evidence of what has been learnt for future study and employment purposes, is regularly used as a reference.

Accreditation status

Whilst this course is not presently accredited with a registered body, accreditation with a suitable agency is a high-priority goal of the course planners. The course co-ordinator is currently surveying and assessing the most suitable alternatives.

CBT/CBL compatibility

Whilst the course is not currently written according to a formal CBT/CBL format, it is hoped that this will soon be achieved, time and resources permitting.

Pathways

The course provides a pathway to further study such as childcare-related TAFE courses and maternal and healthcare courses, to employment (especially in the WACC Occasional Childcare Centre) and/or to English classes.

Evaluation

The evaluation form distributed to students at the end of each course has evolved over time. The current sheet invites students:

- to circle 3 words which BEST describe their feelings about the course from a large selection of given words. Words such as "satisfied", "angry" and "delighted" are randomly scattered over nearly half a page.
- then, to give a brief reason for choosing each word.

The means of documenting student outcomes as concrete evaluation of what has been achieved also continues to evolve. Sometimes stories told in class are published as a booklet for distribution both within the class and to childcare workers in other settings; at other times, the stories, accompanied by photos and drawings, are displayed in full colour on the Centre noticeboard.

Good Practice Criteria

Why

Individual fulfilment: ✓
Material sufficiency: ✓
Cultural belongingness: ✓
Social justice: ✓
National wealth:✓
Global awareness: ✓

What

Wisdom, not just information: ✓
Bodies of knowledge, not just facts: ✓
Crafts, not just skills: ✓
Sensitivity, not just behavioural acts: ✓
Values, not just attitudes: ✓
Rigorous thinking, not just flexibility: ✓

Social contextualizing: ✓
Inclusiveness-perspectives, content, practitioners: ✓
Demystification: ✓
Community development: ✓
Multi-discursiveness: ✓
Innovation in response to socio-economic changes: ✓

How

Fosters empowerment/co-existence/enablement: ✓
In whose interests?: ✓
Self-direction & autonomy and co-operation & community: ✓
Student involvement-decision-making & on-going evaluation: ✓
Compatibility between the publicity and the learning: ✓
Sufficient, fair, valid, reliable assessments: ✓
Recognition of prior learning: ✓

Student Profile

Reasons for enrolling

- To acquire basic child care knowledge and skills for family, study and vocational purposes
- To improve parenting skills
- To become acquainted, in a familiar and friendly local setting, with the possibility of childcare as an area of further study
- To prepare for employment as childcare workers at WACC, or similar childcare providers, where formally accredited qualifications are not required.

Reasons for enrolling now

An urgent need to find employment or qualify for study.

Age/Life stage
16-60, from recent school leavers to grandparents.

Gender
100% women to date, but men are accepted.

Ethnicity and Cultural background
A very wide range of cultural backgrounds, including European, Asian, Middle Eastern and African.

Language
A wide range of language abilities, with varying competence in speaking, reading and writing English. All have ASLPR 2 in oracy.

Educational background
A wide range of educational backgrounds, from minimal or no formal schooling to post-secondary qualifications.

Occupation
All are currently unemployed with little or no paid work experience in Australia.

Income
All are in the lower income range, and mostly concession card holders.

Residence
All live in the inner city regions of Melbourne.

Vocational issues
Most are attending this course hoping to gain employment.

Administration and Resources

Provider
Wingate Avenue Community Centre (WACC)

Address
13a Wingate Ave, Ascot Vale, 3032

Fax
(03) 9376 2676

Contact
Jeanette Goedemoed, WACC and Course Co-ordinator

Policy factors
The WACC Occasional Child Care Staff Policy states that its workers must agree to complete this course.

Funding sources

Over the years, funds have come from a variety of sources, including Commonwealth Adult Literacy Program (CALP), Commonwealth Growth, Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE), Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) and WACC. Finding the time and funds needed for co-ordinating a course of this scope, size and complexity is an on-going challenge that requires considerable ingenuity.

Cost to student

$20 (Concession $10) as Service Fee.

Staffing

1 Course Co-ordinator
Professionals from various childcare agencies
10 sessional tutors, comprising a team of specialist teachers for Storytelling, Art & Craft, Preschool Music and Movement, Multicultural Issues and Child Development.

Equipment and facilities

Toys, craft equipment, computers for producing CVs and for typing up speakers' notes for student reference.

Texts

Tutor-made and ready-made information sheets, brochures, a wide range of children's books, including one class set.

Other resources

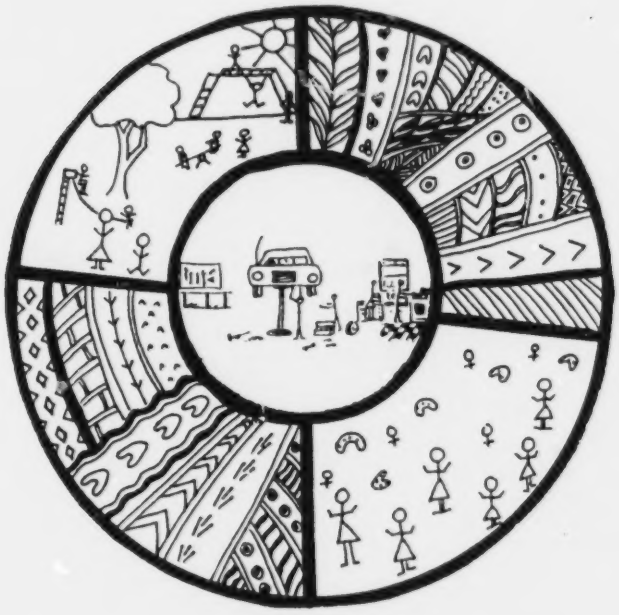
Childcare organisations such as VICSEG, Playworks, Multicultural Resource Centre, Essendon Council Centre.

Physical constraints and solutions

The difficulty of finding classroom space three times a week in this very busy Centre generates a need to identify and organise educationally and vocationally justifiable out-of-class activities.

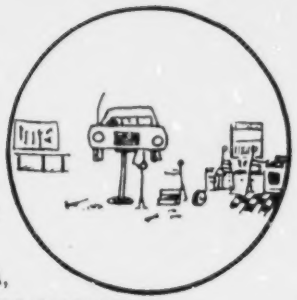
PALYA:
PRE-VOCATIONAL YOUTH TRAINING PROGRAM

Child and Family Care Network



"This really works. We won't change or reduce it simply to get funds. There's too much to lose."

"I'm OK"



The staff in the PALYA youth program located in the eastern Melbourne suburb of Glen Waverley all share one fundamental goal: to ensure that every young person leaving the program can confidently say "I'm OK", and not only mouths it but shows it. PALYA, an Aboriginal word meaning "I'm OK", is a pre-vocational youth training program located in the grounds of the Child and Family Care Network (CFCN) complex. Two excerpts from the Network's Newsletter, one from Autumn 1994 and the other from Spring 1994, provide a vivid picture of PALYA's educational and training work.

> *(1) **NOT WITHOUT HELP** (Autumn, 1994)*
> ** Both exited from school after being on suspension*
> ** Both are 15 years old*
> ** Both with qualifications not extending beyond year 7*
> ** Both have succeeded*
> *After 20 weeks on the PALYA program, one is in an apprenticeship and one is doing a Retail Certificate Course.*
>
> *(2) **PALYA** (Spring, 1994)*
> *As I sat in the comfort of my lounge room over the Christmas break, watching the news, my heart went out to the families in New South Wales who had lost their homes in the bushfires.*
>
> *Part of the PALYA Youth Program includes the propagation of plants, so I was pleased to hear that we could help by sending plants to the affected areas. Last year the young people had success in striking a variety of cuttings and we have sent twenty-five plants, including daisies, lavender, ivy and the herb, rosemary.....Training Officer. .*

The primary purpose of the PALYA program is to assist disadvantaged early school-leavers who, because of their disadvantage in the labour market, are unable at this stage to access Community Based Employment Programs, Commonwealth Employment Services or funded training programs. The types of disadvantage include:

- inability to obtain and/or maintain employment
- limited academic success
- social and emotional problems
- inability to complete funded training courses
- no practical work experience
- learning difficulties
- breakdown of family relationships.

Statistically, the PALYA program can demonstrate that these people are not being catered for in existing service delivery and programs. The apparent reason is that they do not provide a ready outcome. Yet the needs of these young people are complex. The PALYA program averages 3 to 5 referrals a week from multiply disadvantaged young people such as these whose chances of job opportunities, if they are not given assistance at this stage, lessen as their problems become greater.

The research undertaken by the PALYA staff, as well as their first hand experience, shows that socially and emotionally disadvantaged young people have usually experienced a strong sense of failure and low self-esteem. This can, in turn, act as an added disadvantage when manifested as anti-social behaviour. The 8-year PALYA educational experiment shows that experiencing immediate success often proves to be the most effective motivation to facilitate change in chronically failing youth.

The strategies the PALYA Pre-Vocational Youth Training Program uses to achieve its year-in, year-out success are:

- careful selection and assessment of voluntary participants resulting in a 'tailor-made' plan to ensure positive outcomes
- individualised programs for PALYA participants that recognise each young person's level of development and emotional needs, and the skills to be learnt
- employment and study related skills taught through a range of activities under the direction of trained project officers
- close supervision and secure support to the PALYA participants with a 1 : 3 adult : youth ratio
- pre, during and post program support from the Centre's Family Counselling Programs
- regular liaison with industry, educational institutions, welfare agencies and youth workers to ensure that the progress of PALYA participants is closely monitored and problems circumvented.

This service is not only effective but innovative: it is not being offered by other service providers and it does meet a gap in service delivery in an area of greatest need. Special features include:

- access to *on-site facilities* for most phases of the program
- a *specialised training opportunity* consisting of a variety of pre-vocational training activities to provide participants with first hand experience that gives them the chance to make a viable career choice
- *motivation training* by a psychologist and counsellor. This personal development transition course provides participants with the strategies needed to succeed in a working environment. It is conducted at three vital stages of the course: pre-program, during the program and post-program. It caters for groups and individuals.
- *on-job training* in local industry in which dozens of local companies are willing to provide appropriate PALYA participants with practical placement and training for the duration of the course.

Over eight years, the life of the PALYA program, this highly specialised and multi-faceted training model continues to evolve. At the time of writing in April 1995, renovations are nearly complete for converting erstwhile garages into purpose-built workshops for woodwork, automotive work, textiles, art and craft. Nearby is the outdoor gardening area for horticultural purposes as well as the indoor cooking for hospitality purposes. The program relies almost entirely on donations for furnishing and equipping these training facilities.

Because a high value is placed on students' displaying responsible and independent thought and action, PALYA participants are constantly encouraged to make choices and decisions about what to make, what to learn, and how to follow through their choices and decisions. Staff play a key role in assisting participants to choose an

attainable goal or outcome, one that is challenging, yet not out of reach, and one likely to provide relatively immediate success.

All around the Centre complex - in the grounds, inside and outside the workshops, on the noticeboards covered in press cuttings, in the regularly updated photo albums on display, in the latest newsletter - evidence abounds of the high quality work produced by PALYA participants. It is this publicly visible work that speaks so eloquently of this good educational practice that, simultaneously, leads to individual fulfilment, offers great potential for material sufficiency, creates a sense of belonging and makes a significant contribution towards a more just society. The whole program is clearly designed primarily and singlemindedly around the interests of the youth at risk, being a "tried and true" mixture of self-direction and co-operation.

As the CFCN youth and training services manager declares so forcibly, "We know this works. We take accountability very seriously and have detailed records to prove our success." In every sense, whether from the funding bodies' point of view or, more importantly, from the young people's point of view, the PALYA program simply cannot afford to fail. For many of the young people coming through, it may be a last chance to replace a strong sense of failure with an undisputed experience of success, with a firm conviction that they are prepared and entitled to take a rightful place in the workforce and in the wider community.

The special features of the PALYA youth program are well encapsulated in the concept of INTEGRATION. This adult education course admirably demonstrates this aspect of Good Practice Curriculum in action because it:

- takes a wholistic approach to meeting and integrating the various personal, social, educational and vocational needs of the participants
- incorporates and integrates a diversity of educational purposes, subjects, activities and approaches within a coherent educational framework
- integrates being, doing, thinking and feeling.

Educational Characteristics

Philosophy

The training manager has been involved with this course for many years, adapting and reshaping it as new findings come to light. Research and experience have shown that socially and emotionally disadvantaged young people have usually experienced a strong sense of failure and low self-esteem which, in turn, acts as an added disadvantage as it manifests itself in anti-social behaviour. Based on this research and first hand observations, the course planners say that immediate success factors have proved to be the most effective motivators which facilitate change in chronically failing youth.

Aims

To provide for disadvantaged youth opportunities and experiences which will allow them to re-integrate positively into their community, with particular emphasis towards gaining and maintaining employment or further study

To break the cycle of failure these young people have experienced by providing short-term goal-oriented successful experiences and activities

To facilitate the raising of self-worth in young people as a basis for developing an ability to cope with their environment

To provide participants with knowledge and skills which will enhance their employment prospects

To provide experience in, and a knowledge of, a range of occupations in order that the participants can make a more informed choice of vocational and career paths

To foster the development of social and personal skills relevant to participation in the workforce, further training or education, with particular emphasis in working as a member of a team

To develop specific job seeking skills to access available employment opportunities.

Development stage

The PALYA program has been evolving for 8 years.

Length

10 weeks x 4 days per week.

Mode

Face-to-face: ✓
1:1: ✓
Group: ✓
Distance:
Self-access:

Other: Predominantly 3:1

Prerequisites

The program is designed for:

- early school leavers who are not catered for in existing programs because they do not provide a readily achievable pre-determined desired outcome
- young people from 15-20 who enjoy using their hands.

Content and Methodology

By utilising the existing expertise, resources and initiatives within CFCN in conjunction with local community-based providers and industry, PALYA provides a *multiphase service and specialised training opportunity* which assists the individual in job readiness, employment and further education.

PHASE ONE: Personal and Career Counselling and Assessment

* Via the careful intake, assessment and case management process, including documentation of the student's learning progress up to the time of entering the PALYA program, a "tailor-made" plan is developed for each individual to access the program's services applicable to their needs and interest.
* Through the utilisation of the counselling process, participants are able to identify restraints to their progress and build on their strengths and resources for the purpose of attaining their goals.
* The counselling service provides pre, during and post participation support.

PHASE TWO: Specialised Training

As this target group has had either no vocational training or has been unsuccessful in the labour market, PALYA provides them with the opportunity to experience a mix of vocational training. It must be remembered that this group, because of their disadvantage, are most likely to succeed in a "hands on" approach. Short intensive training (in groups of 3) in a number of the following areas is provided:

(a) *Textiles* - designing, cutting and sewing to produce clothes, manchester etc.
(b) *Woodwork* - woodturning, joinery and general carpentry.
(c) *Retail* - producing, collecting and preparing goods for sale; managing an art and craft shop.
(d) *Motor Mechanic Workshop* - basic motor mechanics: repairing and maintaining motors; repairing and preparing vehicles for sale.
(e) *Horticulture* - propagating plants for retail sale; planting, designing and maintaining native and exotic gardens.
(f) *Cooking* - food preparation, health and hygiene, survival cooking.
(g) *Computers* - individualised program (when available).

Extra support programs in literacy, numeracy and English as a second language can be provided by local providers if required.

PHASE THREE: Work Experience

This phase is vital. Through work experience, many participants have greater chance of being employed or becoming more employable. Most of those disadvantaged in the labour market find that lack of work in industry is the very drawback which makes employment difficult. CFCN has a committed employer base which understands the requirements of the target group and are prepared to assist with work experience placements by providing adequate training and experience. The PALYA Co-ordinator plays a vital role supporting both the employer and the participants placed in industry.

Competencies/Expected Learning Outcomes

Participants are provided with the opportunity to experience a variety of specialised industry-based training programs and thereby develop both general and industry specific occupational skills in Textiles, Plant Nursery, Workshop Safety, Hospitality, Automotive and Woodwork. Detailed written descriptions of the Skills, Knowledge and Work Requirements for each skill area spell out the exact learning outcomes to be achieved.

Assessment Criteria, Methods and Tasks

The key assessment criteria and tasks are contained in the PALYA course curriculum document that details the Skills, Knowledge and Work Requirements that have been developed for each training area.

An example below from one of the five learning areas, the area of Textiles, typifies the format used for all the skill areas:
Skills: Ability to operate a sewing machine
Knowledge: An understanding of the different fixtures and accessories of the sewing machine and their uses
Work Requirements: Students demonstrate their ability to wind the bobbin, to thread the machine ready for use, to sew using different stitch settings eg backwards/ forwards, zigzag, buttonhole

It is these very detailed criteria, these descriptions of the assessment tasks required in each skill area, that provide the basis for:

- on-going observation, discussion and direct feedback to students
- the daily written record made by teachers of each student's achievements
- the detailed written description of each student's achievements in each of the specialised training areas at the completion of the course
- the employer-prepared work placement report.

Reporting and Certification

Students leave with a CFCN certificate and CFCN reports that detail their achievements in all the skills areas, including survival skills, as well as their work placement report. The certificate and final reports provide documentary evidence for recognition of prior learning (RPL) for future occasions.

Accreditation status

Though not an accredited course, it is deliberately and specifically designed and documented as a preparatory pathway for related accredited courses, such as Certificate of Occupational Studies (COS) courses.

CBT/CBL Compatibility

The curriculum is clearly presented in competency-based format, outlining both skills and knowledge outcomes, but not conforming to any particular systemic pattern or format.

Pathways

Appropriate pathways and placement in employment, training and/or further education are assured by:

- making placements in CFCN's existing accredited courses in Retail and Hospitality
- using existing networks and established links with community agencies and

educational institutions such as TAFE colleges and community providers
- using established links with local industry
- providing up to 3 months post-participation support.

Evaluation

A range of evaluation methods, listed below, have been especially designed and integrated to monitor the effectiveness of this course.
(1) The PALYA program follows the program described in the text **Course Maintenance Processes** as its overall model for on-going evaluation.
(2) Evaluation of PALYA participants' on-going progress (as well as program evaluation) is done on a regular basis via weekly meetings arranged with PALYA staff and counsellors to assess and review each participant's ability to achieve his/her goals. An individual time frame is provided for each participant. A young person usually only leaves the program when another course is available, or employment has been found. Whilst most students participate only once in the PALYA program, some are advised to re-enrol for a second time.
(3) A record of participants' and program performance - including the number of participants, their age, gender, level of difficulty, training received, source of referral, attrition rate, employment placement or other outcome - is maintained at CFCN.
(4) The PALYA program monitors and documents the post-program labour force experience of these participants, including their employment and training retention rates.

Good Practice Criteria

Why

Individual fulfilment: ✓
Material sufficiency: ✓
Cultural belongingness: ✓
Social justice: ✓
National wealth ✓
Global awareness: ✓

What

Wisdom, not just information: ✓
Bodies of knowledge, not just facts: ✓
Crafts, not just skills: ✓
Sensitivity, not just behavioural acts: ✓
Values, not just attitudes: ✓
Rigorous thinking, not just flexibility: ✓

Social contextualizing: ✓
Inclusiveness-perspectives, content, practitioners: ✓
Demystification: ✓
Community development: ✓
Multi-discursiveness: ✓
Innovation in response to socio-economic changes: ✓

How

Fosters empowerment/co-existence/enablement: ✓
In whose interests?: ✓
Self-direction & autonomy and co-operation & community: ✓
Student involvement-decision-making & on-going evaluation: ✓
Compatibility between publicity and learning taking place: ✓
Sufficient, fair, valid, reliable assessments: ✓
Recognition of prior learning: ✓

Student Profile

Reasons for enrolling

- To improve job readiness, chances of employment and/or further education in a unique program that has a widespread reputation for successfully meeting its aims
- To obtain and maintain employment.

Reasons for enrolling now

To break the cycle of failure experienced so far.

Age/Life stage

15-20, mostly 15-16, recent school leavers and school refusers who are unable to thrive in a full-time school situation.

Gender

Equal numbers of young men and young women.

Ethnicity and Cultural background

Mostly Anglo students are referred, though occasionally Asian and Maori students are also referred.

Language

While students are all fluent in spoken English, many are not functionally literate.

Educational background

Participants have some secondary schooling, but have not developed far academically.

Occupation

All are unemployed with no work experience.

Income

Students come from families on a wide range of incomes.

Residence

Participants come from a wide range of Melbourne suburbs.

Vocational issues

All want to find employment.

Other

10 students participate in each course. Whilst students are often socially and emotionally disturbed, it is not an integration program for students with disabilities. It is, however, designed for students who are often aggressive, violent and/or withdrawn and with very low self-esteem.

Administration and Resources

Provider

Child and Family Care Network (CFCN)

Address

583 Ferntree Gully Rd, Glen Waverley 3150

Fax

(03) 9560 6316

Contact

Janine Mifsud, Youth and Training Services Manager

Policy factors

Youth at grave risk who are entitled to special targeting and assistance (eg Department of Labour's "Youth Agenda") are given top priority.

Funding sources

Over the years, funds have come from a variety of sources. In 1995, funds are provided by CFCN and Eastern Region Council of ACFE.

Cost to student

$5 per day (negotiable).

Staffing

1 Manager (Janine Mifsud, Youth and Training Services Manager)
1 Automotive Teacher/PALYA Co-ordinator (Geoff Thomas)
1 Textiles/Art/Craft Teacher (Sharon Sloane)
1 Woodwork Teacher (Kevin Gilders)
1 Woodwork/Automotive/Horticulture Teacher (Ray Carapellotti)
3 Psychologists
1 Work Experience Liaison Worker.

Equipment and facilities

Workshops, tools and other equipment for Automotive, Woodwork, Art, Craft, Textiles, Cooking and Horticulture; the CFCN Shop, "Wanda Round".

Physical constraints and solutions

Previously dispersed training and workshop sites have recently been relocated so all facilities are now situated on the main campus site at Glen Waverley.

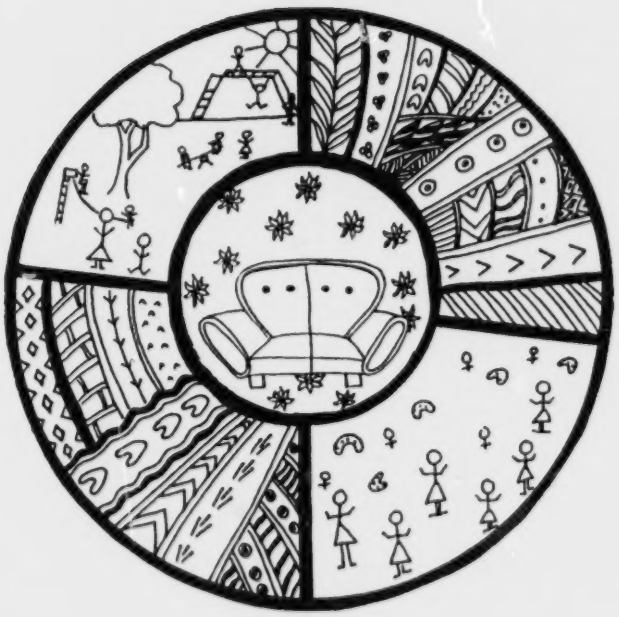
Copyright

The staff are happy to share the curriculum with interested educators.

Responsiveness

FURNITURE RESTORATION

Narre Warren SkillShare



"It's doing good work, and giving back to the community that matter."

"We work for the community"

This 8-week, full-time Furniture Restoration course at Narre Warren SkillShare on the outskirts of Melbourne has reached a very important milestone. It currently stands midway between its past, as a short hobby course at the nearby Narre Neighbours community centre, and its future, as an enlarged job creation enterprise, a course development that is seen as a natural next step.

Narre Neighbours, just a short walk away and with which Narre SkillShare is closely allied, still offers the two hobby courses from which this SkillShare course grew - an 18-week x 2.5 hours per week hobby course in French Polishing and Furniture Restoration as well as an 8-week x 3 hours per week hobby course in Basic Cabinet Making and Basic Upholstery. The Furniture Restoration/Small Business course at Narre Warren SkillShare, the subject of this study, has combined both these courses and added job enhancement skills as well. As a result, this thriving offspring is now an 8-week x 20 hours per week integrated course offering Cabinet Making, French Polishing, Upholstering, Job Search and Life Skills.

The next long-term plan in the evolution of this course is to secure funds for a much-expanded Furniture Restoration/Small Business course which will retain the curriculum of the current full-time course but which will develop the small business side much more. This would provide the chance to plan and set up a manufacturing business. It would be a natural next step from the present notably successful course that provides the perfect grounding for such an adventurous, but well founded, development.

All these course changes have been in direct response to community need, and with the good of the whole community firmly in mind. As the manager of Labour Market Programs at Narre Warren SkillShare says, "With all our courses, it is important we work for and give to the community as well as for the individuals involved. We always keep both perspectives in view." Achievements in this course to date are noteworthy on both accounts. Not only have individuals begun small, home-based businesses, but the community has benefited too.

One community project has already proved its worth. Artists' easels have been built and sold to local schools, resulting in considerable savings for the schools involved. Other projects are at an earlier stage. Rudimentary market research suggests that making furniture to be sold at the Narre Neighbours Craft Shoppe, constructing kindergarten furniture for local creches and designing playground equipment for local schools all seem financially viable business and employment options.

The three courses planned for 1995/96 will build on the sound foundations provided by the present course. They will enable participants to research local community demands more extensively, to spot niche markets, to determine a product's likely life cycle, to design the product from beginning to end, and to make key decisions about the important matters of quality and pricing. It is thanks to the pioneering nature of this second-generation offspring, an original educational model blending the talents of outstanding craftspeople, successful business people and experienced community workers, that the work and outcomes of these furniture restoration courses will be seen and felt by many in the community, and not only by those who enrol in classes.

Such authentic responsiveness to community and client needs is the result of deliberate thought and action. It is a striking feature of the Narre Neighbours adult education and community development complex as a whole, to which Narre SkillShare is a very active contributor. This philosophy is summed up in the motto "growing in all directions" that is featured on the cover of its most recent program guideand it permeates all its educational decisions and work. The Narre Neighbours community inde practises what it preaches.

This dual focus is particularly evident in the choice of staff for the furniture restoration course. Not only are highly qualified and award-winning tutors chosen, but they are also tutors with a strong sense of community responsibility who have a proven record of making significant community contributions through their educational and training work. This means that students learn concretely, in context, the close connections between personal growth and development and community growth and development. They experience for themselves, first hand, the ways in which issues of economics, employment, education, training, social planning and community networks are all inextricably linked. "Furniture restoration" becomes a pathway to both personal and community restoration.

The special features of the Furniture Restoration course are well encapsulated in the concept of RESPONSIVENESS. This course admirably demonstrates this aspect of Good Practice in action because it:

- evolves continuously in thoughtful response to the socio-economic changes occurring in individuals' lives, in the community and in society at large
- welcomes and readily responds to new ideas and new approaches and new challenges
- interprets "responsiveness" broadly, offering a multi-purpose curriculum that is simultaneously attentive to personal, social, educational and vocational aspirations, knowing that vocational aims simply cannot be separated from emotional and psychological needs.

Educational Characteristics

Philosophy

The furniture restoration tutor says that seeing people achieve good work gives him the greatest pleasure of all. When participants smile at the finish of a piece of work, it makes him smile too.

Because he has wide experience in the furniture industry - running his own business, working in TAFE, acting as consultant for the Victorian Furnishing Industry Training Board (VFITB) and being three times judge for "Apprentice of the Year", he knows what is required from different "bosses" in different contexts. He models the different behaviours appropriate to different situations, and urges his students to mirror and practise them. He describes his approach as clear and firm, especially in matters of occupational health and safety.

Aims

To equip participants with the theory, practical application and techniques of cabinet making, French polishing and upholstering

To equip participants with skills enabling them to seek employment in the furniture industry, or to pursue further study in this and related areas

To provide the first step in a training pathway to employment for unemployed people who consider themselves unsuited to more text-based training programs

To boost confidence in people who are feeling they are failures

To simulate the demands and culture of the workplace by creating conditions similar to a workplace, for example, having participants conform to regulations with regard to punctuality and attendance

To introduce and foster the use of industry language

To promote the concept of self-employment, especially for the older people having difficulty finding employment in local industry.

Development Stage

This course has been run twice, and there will be three courses running for 1995/96.

Length

8 weeks x 20 hours per week (full-time).

Mode

Face-to-face: ✓
1:1: ✓
Group: ✓
Distance:
Self-access:

Prerequisites

Basic English and Basic Maths.

Content and Methodology

The course is made up of the subjects listed below. At each stage of the furniture restoration process, participants work on their own piece of furniture that they have brought along to restore. Those with prior carpentry experience are encouraged to share their knowledge and skills with the rest of the class.

Cabinet Making (30 hours)
Use of hand tools
Use of power tools
Timber joints
Wood working projects
Timber identification and characteristics
Timber growth and structure

French Polishing (80 hours)
Each of the 15 steps in French Polishing, presented in a strict sequence, is preceded by a theoretical introduction to that particular step.
Stripping
Timber preparation
Making French polish
Staining
Colouring
Glossing
Refining the polish

Upholstering (30 hours)
Materials
Stitching
Tacking
Restrapping
Respringing
Basic diamond buttoning
Studwork
Fitting handles, hinges and hardware
Maintenance

Job Search (10 hours)
Labour market research
Exploring job search options
Application letters
Resume writing
Telephone technique
Presentation and grooming
Interview skills

Life Skills
Problem solving
Personal effectiveness
Communications
Occupational health and safety
Self-esteem and motivation.

Competencies/Expected Learning Outcomes

To be able to take a damaged piece of furniture, and to rebuild, repolish and (re)upholster it

To be able to demonstrate competence in Basic Carpentry, including the use of hand tools and the making of a variety of timber joints

To be able to demonstrate the 15 steps in French Polishing

To be able to demonstrate competence in Basic Upholstery, including stitching and attaching fittings.

Assessment Criteria, Methods and Tasks

Assessment is based on the following:

- a well finished product. Photos taken before and after the furniture restoration attest to the achievement. The restored piece of furniture provides three-dimensional evidence for each participant's resumé.
- regular attendance and participation in class activities. The tutors pay close, but informal, attention to students' behaviour and attitudes both inside and outside of class.
- success in the written test for French polishing.

Reporting and Certification

A laminated certificate, detailing the furniture restoration competencies obtained, is presented to those who satisfactorily complete the course. The course certificate provides valuable documentary evidence for recognition of prior learning (RPL) for future study and/or employment purposes.

Accreditation status

Consideration is currently being given to this high-priority matter. It is quite likely that authority to conduct the Certificate of Occupational Studies (COS) Furnishings course, or part of it, will be the most suitable accreditation option to pursue.

CBT/CBL Compatibility

Whilst the course is CBT-based, it has not yet been documented according to any systemic format. This is planned for the future.

Pathways

To date, students:

- have progressed to another furniture restoration course, either Intermediate or Advanced, at Narre Neighbours
- have become self-employed or
- have found employment in this, or a related, industry.

Evaluation

A verbal review follows each stage of the course. The need, expressed by students, for more time for "the business side" prompted the decision to apply for funds for a much-expanded "Furniture Restoration/Small Business" course that will enable a small business to be set up.

Student attendance and retention rates are monitored as key indicators of success. The high incidence of early arrivals and late departures has characterised this course from the beginning.

Regular, informal observations, conversations and contact provide evidence of change in attitude. It might sound insignificant but the first smile is considered a major milestone.

Good Practice Criteria

Why

Individual fulfilment: ✓
Material sufficiency: ✓
Cultural belongingness: ✓
Social justice: ✓
National wealth: ✓
Global awareness: ✓

What

Wisdom, not just information: ✓
odies of knowledge, not just facts: ✓
Crafts, not just skills: ✓
Sensitivity, not just behavioural acts: ✓
Values, not just attitudes: ✓
Rigorous thinking, not just flexibility: ✓

Social contextualizing: ✓
Inclusiveness-perspectives, content, practitioners: ✓
Demystification: ✓
Community development: ✓
Multi-discursiveness: ✓
Innovation in response to socio-economic changes: ✓

How

Fosters empowerment/co-existence/enablement: ✓
In whose interests?: ✓
Self-direction & autonomy and co-operation & community: ✓
Student involvement-decision-making & on-going evaluation: ✓
Compatibility between publicity and learning taking place: ✓
Sufficient, fair, valid, reliable assessments: ✓
Recognition of prior learning: ✓

Student Profile

Reasons for enrolling

To learn new skills to improve job advancement chances

To be part of a "hands-on" course that provides clear and immediate proof of achievement.

Reasons for enrolling now

The urgency of finding employment.

Age/Life stage

17-60+, from recent school-leavers to older, unemployed people.

Gender

Initially there were predominantly men but the number of women is growing.

Ethnicity and Cultural background

Students come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds.

Language

All speak, read and write basic English.

Educational background

All have some secondary schooling, though most have no post-secondary educational qualifications. A few have trade qualifications.

Occupation

Students come from a wide range of occupational backgrounds, but mostly trades and clerical.

Income

All are currently on unemployment benefits.

Residence

Residential locations span suburban, outer suburban and rural.

Vocational issues

All are currently unemployed, many with a long history of unemployment. The older men are having the greatest difficulty finding employment.

Administration and Resources

Provider

Narre Warren SkillShare

Address

58 Webb St, Narre Warren. 3805

Fax

(03) 9704 0033 (Narre Neighbours)

Contact

Wayne Hewitt, Manager, Labour Market Programs

Policy factors

All government policies and documents related to unemployment, for example, "Working Nation".

Funding sources

SkillShare.

Cost to student

Nil.

Copyright

The furniture restoration tutor can be contacted for more details.

Staffing

1 Furniture Restoration tutor (Kim Atkinson)
1 Job Search/Life Skills tutor (Wayne Hewitt)

Equipment and facilities

Workshop, timber, carpentry tools, polishes, polishing materials.

Texts

An in-depth, tutor-written, 21-page booklet on furniture restoration is provided at the end of the course.

Physical constraints and solutions

Present workshop space limits class numbers to 10. Plans for expansion are underway to accommodate more students and more levels.

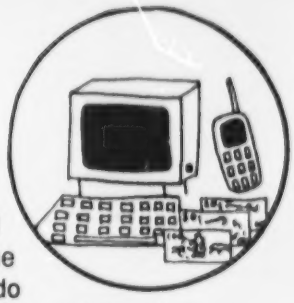
Innovation

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN

Bellarine Living and Learning Centre Inc

"This course is one totally out of the box, deliberately. It fills a need because women don't have to fit into boxes to get in. It fills the niches left by courses with strict eligibility criteria that always leave somebody out."

"A course for the 90's"



Ninette Trifiletti, the designer and principal presenter of the "Small Business Development Course for Women" at Bellarine Living and Learning Centre in Geelong, is keen to stress that in her course she uses business resources, not training textbooks. She chooses to do this because she believes very strongly in students being immediately and directly initiated into the culture and thinking of the contemporary business world. Access to a wide range of up-to-date, current business magazines and journals, the primary reference materials in her classes, is seen as the most effective way of bringing this about. She believes this puts her students in touch, from the outset, with the latest business and enterprise thinking, ideas, models and examples. From the very beginning, they are immersed in the "real" world of business.

Ninette can speak with authority about the "real" world of business and can justify from first hand experience why she is so dedicated to incorporating real business information, real business texts and real business activities into her classes. It is her breadth of experience in the business world that gives both depth and authenticity to the "Small Business Development Course for Women" that she designed. A few details about her professional background indicates the range of contexts and networks she brings to running this course.

Ninette runs "Action 2000", her own consultancy business in management and marketing. She also has wide-ranging experience in a variety of business roles and settings, placing her in a perfect position to provide ready, recent examples of the many facets of business life, whether working in the world of business or setting up and running a small, home-based business. She is also an active member of many business and community organisations, including the local Chamber of Commerce, the Geelong 2010 Committee and the Business and Professional Women's (BPW) Association. This broad community and business experience provides a rich source of ideas and examples on planning, on defining and creating "preferred futures" and on converting plans into action.

All this knowledge, however, does not mean that this is a presenter-dominated course. In fact, all accounts of the course stress its participant-centred nature. This is most evident in the commitment shown to tailoring each course to the unique needs and strengths of the particular women who have enrolled. This on-going monitoring, evaluation, research and development means Ninette has accumulated a vast bank of personally designed handouts, all of which were designed for particular groups in particular contexts. These handouts all encapsulate the latest thoughts, the latest findings of business theory and practice from around the world and are original both in concept and design. The way in which they capture and represent these ideas of "real life" innovative business leads to another distinguishing feature of this dynamic educator's work and style.

Her methodology can be described as wholistic. By this she means all course activities and communications acknowledge and appeal to the mind (SKILLS), to the heart (PERSONAL QUALITIES), to the body (IMAGE) and to the soul (VALUES). Her handouts embody this philosophy. The words and the graphics complement each other, both simultaneously addressing the intellect, feelings, the senses and beliefs. Each handout is unique, with no sense of there being a formulaic or standardised approach. She deliberately confines all her handouts to one page, so

that readers catch the message, everything that is being said, at one glance.

The adult education approach that she takes stems from her fundamental belief that each person is unique and it is this uniqueness that needs to be identified, strengthened and put into practice. This concentration on the concept of empowerment shapes everything she does. It explains why she has chosen the mottoes "Discovering the Power of You" and "Gems" for the range of innovative adult education programs which she has developed. With this emphasis on empowerment, she is keen to stress that she is not a trainer, but a change agent. And one of her key aims is to empower the women in her courses so that they too see themselves as change agents, and act accordingly.

Characterising her "Small Business Development Course for Women" as "a course for the 90's", Ninette is putting into practice ideas of current thinkers who see the role of the educator as being future-focused, as knowingly imagining and constructing preferred personal, social and global futures. This means focusing on women's strengths as they are now and on what they might become. It means encouraging women to become what she calls "self-marketing", a concept which she defines as "discovering/packaging/promoting our own uniqueness for the benefit of myself and others".

She singles out one marketing principle in particular as critical in translating a vision of a preferred future into a reality, and that is the principle called FOCUS. This is shorthand for: Find your niche, Off with the blinkers, Create your culture and philosophy, Use funnel vision, See the big picture. The variety of guest presenters who contribute their expertise to this course, specialists in accounting, book-keeping, computers, marketing, personal development and small business, including graduates of this very course, all act as powerful role models. Through their own individuality, they demonstrate persuasively that this philosophy can take an infinite number of forms.

To an outsider, what characterises this adult education practice is its thoroughness and its attention to the minutest detail. Consider, for example, the thoroughness of the planning, methodology and evaluation for the major event that comes at the end of each course, the "Showcase of Local Women's Business Ideas".

First of all, there's the lead-up stage. This involves each woman in the course undertaking detailed thinking and preparation around the following tasks - a Business Idea, a Business Description, Market Research, a Future Marketing Strategy, a Competition Analysis, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis, an Operational Plan, a Financial Analysis, and Advertising and Promotion to realise the original Business Idea.

Second, there's the preparation for the Showcase itself. This involves clarifying Objectives, selecting a Title, choosing a design Theme, making arrangements for each woman's Individual Table, compiling a Task List, organising Promotion and inventing a Theme to sell to the media. This last aspect must embrace issues central to the course (issues such as thinking women, independence, individuality, development of personal identity and role, new directions, building up a network, evolving ideas, caring and sharing) as well as the big issues (issues such as women of the 90's can do it, financial independence, freedom of expression, creating opportunities, embodiment of Geelong 2010 themes of vision, innovation and creativity).

Third, there's the Showcase itself. This involves talking and taking a public stand about the Business Idea on display. It requires dealing with all sorts of comments and questions from the visitors who come. Some of these are key local figures but most are strangers, a situation demanding high-level communication skills.

Finally, there's the follow-up evaluation of the Showcase. This involves analysing the results of the visitor survey as well as participating in the course group review of the Showcase event. The course group review centres on a discussion of the Enterprise Learning Brief that each woman completed in writing after the event. As the focus of the Showcase is "to provide experience in creating, developing, marketing and presenting products and services for a home-based business", this learning brief concentrates on specifying and documenting outcomes. It covers such matters as the skills and knowledge gained, the nature of the group dynamics, organisational factors, any problems encountered plus their solutions, the key results and learning outcomes, and lessons for the future.

The last word in this account must be left for honouring the women's achievements which are, after all, the central focus of all this detailed planning and modelling. A random sample of businesses begun in the last year or so cover the following areas: painting on glass, smocked children's wear, natural healing, puzzles for entertainment and education, a Geelong-based tourist service exclusively for Japanese travellers, porcelain figures and dolls, clowning and children's entertainment, quality home-baked biscuits, cottage garden and herb plants, three dimensional wall plaques for home and school, decorative homeware, woodcrafts, desk top publishing and picture framing. To quote a letter to the "Geelong Advertiser" announcing a forthcoming showcase, these are certainly "Women of the 90's Creating a Path Towards 2000".

The special features of the "Small Business for Women" course are well encapsulated in the concept of INNOVATION. This adult education course admirably demonstrates this aspect of Good Practice Curriculum in action because it :

- presents an adult education course that is original in every sense, from the designer handouts to the overall curriculum design and implementation that blend different disciplines together in a pioneering way
- incorporates, models and fuses the latest, most novel, thinking in marketing, personal development, small business and futures education
- encourages and enables the women participants involved to identify and act on their own capacities to be uniquely resourceful and successful innovators.

Educational Characteristics

Philosophy

The course designer and principal presenter believes firmly that in simplicity, there is truth. This commitment to simplicity, however, does not mean shallowness. Quite the opposite. Ninette sees her work as quite profound, both in concept and in content, a visionary course, a wholistic course, conceived with the twenty-first century firmly in mind. What sets it apart, she says, is that it is a very focused course, one based on new philosophies about learning, about designing and creating preferred futures. This is best illustrated in the way she has benchmarked the course against the best practice, the best practitioners and the best thinkers of the 1990's.

This commitment to innovation, to "discovering the power of you", is why she says: "I'm not a trainer, I'm a change agent." Her adult education philosophy could be summed up as: "Learning = Curiosity + Mistakes + Quick Recovery", one of the ideas illustrated and promoted in one of her tailor-made student handouts.

Aims

To develop a business idea that generates income through a home based business or employment

To acquire an understanding and awareness of the processes and legal requirements involved in developing, establishing and operating a business from home

To write and present a business plan

To conduct an enterprise activity and organise media coverage

To foster personal growth, computer skills and self empowerment.

Development stage

As of May 1995, the course is being run for the third time.

Length

9 weeks x 9 hours (over 2 days) per week.

Mode

Face-to-face: ✓
1:1: ✓
Group: ✓
Distance:
Self-access:

Prerequisites

Given this course's commitment to open access, special emphasis is placed on encouraging all interested women to participate. Minimal literacy skills are needed to benefit most from the activities and handouts.

Content and Methodology

The course is organised around 5 key *content* areas. They are:

1. The Creation and Development of a Business Idea through:
- recognising potential products and services for generating income
- creating an environment of innovation and enterprise
- identifying target markets
- developing a preliminary business plan
- developing a network of mentors and professionals
- considering an appropriate business and logo
- determining product presentation
- developing techniques for sourcing and establishing suppliers and clients
- determining product costs and developing order forms and stock control techniques
- budgeting and developing cash flow statements.

2. Marketing Strategies on a Budget through:
- identifying an appropriate market niche
- conducting effective market research and identifying market needs
- understanding the value of networking in establishing a market
- learning the sales process
- adding value through customer service
- creating a competitive advantage.

3. Self Marketing and Self Management through:
- setting business, career and personal goals
- developing self-confidence and assertiveness in communication
- developing skills for effectively organising time and dealing with stress
- developing creative personal and business problem solving techniques
- practising the skills required for negotiation and decision making
- learning effective telephone techniques.

4. Basic Book-keeping and Legal Requirements through:
- understanding the reasons for keeping accurate financial records
- setting up and operating a basic set of book-keeping records.

5. Enterprise Activity through:
- developing and conducting an enterprise activity
- organising appropriate media coverage.

There are two features in particular that distinguish the *methodology* of this course. They are:

1. A 90's Focus and Best Practice Business Approach that is exemplified by:
- the empowerment and maximisation of participants' skills
- a creative and supportive learning environment
- a wholistic approach
- the linking of concepts
- the designer handouts
- directional concepts and action plans
- state of the art resource materials and real life case studies
- the extensive and unique personal and professional skills of the facilitator
- the introductions to business networks
- support systems and the help hotline
- the diverse range of guest speakers

- the weekly overview
- the mentoring program.

2. An Integrated Approach to Training

   The unique wholistic style that is used in this program incorporates enterprise training, co-operative learning and collaborative assessment techniques. It is taught as an integrated educational experience, not as separate discrete modules. All participants are urged to declare and share their relevant skills and expertise, sometimes running sessions in their own specialist areas.

Competencies/Expected Learning Outcomes

- Creation of a business idea
- Establishment of a home based business providing products or services directly to the marketplace, for example, markets, cottage businesses, direct mail
- Readiness for employment
- Development of a networking, mentoring and support system.

Assessment Criteria, Methods and Tasks

"Real life" tasks are allocated as work requirements at the end of each class, both as follow-up to the day's topic and as groundwork for the next topic. Assessment is therefore based on regular attendance; participation in all activities, both inside the class and out-of-class, including the regular reviews and evaluations; and completion of the tasks set as work requirements.

Reporting and Certification

The Centre issues two certificates, with competencies specified, to successful participants, one for the "Small Business Development Course for Women" and one for the computer component. These Centre certificates provide documentary evidence (RPL) for future use.

Accreditation status

This matter has been thoroughly researched, but no suitable accredited course has been found. All those that have been investigated have been considered too restricting. They have not been broad and wholistic enough, with insufficient focus or emphasis on the role of personal empowerment in achieving educational and business goals.

CBT/CBL Compatibility

Whilst this course clearly articulates "increased, observable competence" as a top priority, the course documents are not written according to any systemic CBT formula, and deliberately so.

Pathways

The course prepares women for:

- small business
- full or part time employment
- computers
- night classes in Accounting and Book-keeping at Bellarine Living and Learning Centre
- entry into the NEIS scheme
- DEET-funded courses such as Jobskills or Jobtrain
- TAFE courses.

Evaluation

This is integrated, on-going and taken very seriously. It is many-faceted and includes:

- a daily recap in which students note "today's 5 most important points"
- group peer evaluations, both of the course and of each others' work, throughout the duration of the course
- evaluations, at regular intervals, by guest panellists of student presentations
- two showcase evaluations: one by the course participants, after the event, as they debrief and assess their own performance, and another by the public, on a sheet distributed on the day, to those who came as visitors and spectators
- detailed, end-of-course, evaluations by each student of the entire course.

Good Practice Criteria

Why

Individual fulfilment: ✓
Material sufficiency: ✓
Cultural belongingness: ✓
Social justice: ✓
National wealth: ✓
Global awareness: ✓

What

Wisdom, not just information: ✓
Bodies of knowledge, not just facts: ✓
Crafts, not just skills: ✓
Sensitivity, not just behavioural acts: ✓
Values, not just attitudes: ✓
Rigorous thinking, not just flexibility: ✓

Social contextualizing: ✓
Inclusiveness-perspectives, content, practitioners: ✓
Demystification: ✓
Community development: ✓
Multi-discursiveness: ✓
Innovation in response to socio-economic changes: ✓

How

Fosters empowerment/co-existence/enablement: ✓
In whose interests?: ✓
Self-direction & autonomy and co-operation & community: ✓
Student involvement-decision-making & on-going evaluation: ✓
Compatibility between publicity and learning taking place: ✓
Sufficient, fair, valid, reliable assessments: ✓
Recognition of prior learning: ✓

Student Profile

Reasons for enrolling

- To do something significant and substantial for "me"
- To break out of the present rut
- To learn to develop the self-confidence, knowledge and focus to succeed
- To build a plan for achieving a goal
- To develop the know-how to combine ideas, directions and motivation into a successful business grounding
- To organise, streamline and expand a present business.

Reasons for enrolling now

Being in transition from one life stage to another, the women see this course as providing focus and direction for making this change successfully.

Age/Life stage

18 upwards, from young mothers to retired grandmothers.

Gender

100% women.

Ethnicity and Cultural background

While the majority of women come from an Anglo background, each group to date has contained women from Dutch, Slavic and Mediterranean backgrounds as well.

Language

All the women to date have been competent at reading, writing and speaking English.

Educational background

A wide range of educational backgrounds, from leaving school at middle secondary to obtaining tertiary degrees, is represented.

Occupation

Whilst most have not been in paid employment for some time, all have been in the workforce at some earlier time. Employment has been in a wide range of occupations.

Income

A wide range of incomes, with some women on pensions, is represented.

Residence

The women come from Geelong and the surrounding area, for example, Anglesea.

Vocational issues

All the women are seeking financial and personal empowerment.

Administration and Resources

Provider
Bellarine Living and Learning Centre Inc

Address
20 Worden Court, Whittington. 3219

Fax
(052) 9481 213

Contact
Chris Denmead, Adult Education Officer

Policy factors
This course promotes the development of enterprising skills, a key aim in many business, industry and training policies.

Funding source
Barwon South-West Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) Regional Council.

Cost to student
$20 administrative fee.

Copyright
Ninette Trifiletti, who developed this course in her own time and with her own resources, can be contacted about this matter via the Bellarine Living and Learning Centre.

Staffing
1 course designer and principal presenter (Ninette Trifiletti)
Support from the Centre's Adult Education Officer
A number of guest tutors in specialist areas such as computing, accounting, marketing, personal development, small business and book-keeping.

It is important to note the professional resources of the course designer, a management consultant and a self marketing specialist who runs her own business. She maintains a wide range of memberships to keep up to date and in touch, acts as a mentor to others setting up businesses and serves on a number of local business and community boards.

Equipment and facilities
The resources of the Bellarine Centre now provide an excellent learning environment, including a spacious classroom and display area for showcasing, as well as up-to-date equipment which is available at all times.

Texts

The course designer introduces and draws on an extensive range of up-to-date business journals such as ***The Results Report, Business Book Summaries, Geelong Business News*** and ***Business Directions***, as well as books by internationally known authors such as Albrecht, de Bono, Henderson and Weldon. These are made available to course participants through a resource library located at the Centre which has been specifically set up for this purpose.

Physical constraints and solutions

With the present spacious room, there are none.

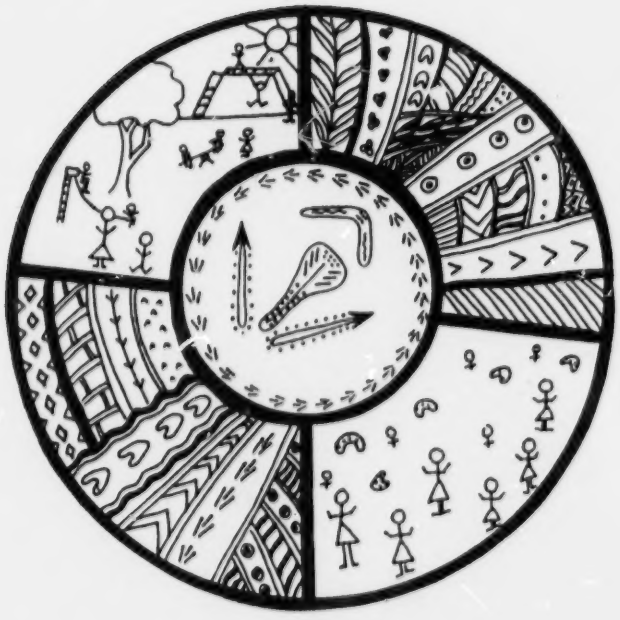
RPL

Those women who are competent with computers prior to the course can gain exemption.

Belonging

KOORI ART WORKSHOPS

Hastings Community House



"Kooris are so isolated around here, it's important to get people involved."

"Remembering the Dreamtime"

The people who come to the Koori Art Group at Hastings on the shores of Westernport Bay are concerned about the number of times they keep hearing other people say "There are no Kooris around here". Knowing there are over 300 Koori families registered on the peninsula, they want their group to make people aware that Kooris very definitely are around. They want to make themselves visible and known for a number of reasons. They want other Kooris to know they are here so they can come and join them. And they want the wider community to know they're here to break down barriers and misunderstandings, to change the widespread mistaken idea that there are no longer Kooris in this part of Victoria.

Many of the people who come along to the group have been coming for some years now. Because they feel such a strong sense of belonging, they say that the group has given them a sense of community again, the community they lost with the arrival of the whites and the disruption, displacement and destruction this caused. In this group, people come together with members of the Koori community who live nearby as well as people from Aboriginal communities from all around Australia who have moved into the area. Together they can search for their family histories and cultural roots, together they can start to put broken communities back together again, together they can travel with others making the same cultural journey, leaving behind the isolation they've known for so long.

And they have found that art is a very powerful way of doing all these things.

All of the men, women and families who have come, and who keep coming, have made important discoveries in this class. They have discovered their talents as artists. They have discovered that they can take their work outside the classroom to festivals and art shows where they can exhibit and sell it. They have discovered that people are delighted and excited by their work. They have discovered that they have a very important role to play in the wider community. They have discovered that they can make a very powerful contribution to the reconciliation of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

At the Hastings Day Festival, an annual local event, the Koori Art Group designed and organised a kids' float for the street parade as well as setting up an art exhibition of their work. As well, late last year, they also organised, with assistance from Steve Walsh who is the local Koori Program Officer and a key person in the development of the group, the first Awara Koori Festival.

This extremely well attended Saturday afternoon cultural event brought together Koori groups and Koori activities for many hours of music, dancing, games and storytelling. A particularly popular event was the storytelling session, with children dressed in paper costumes (that had been made by the art group) acting out the words and bringing the stories to life. The festival was given a lot of publicity in the local paper and certainly put the local Koori community on the map.

The art group not only provides the chance to do art ("lots of us couldn't afford to do art without this class") but it is a vital information source as well. Even if people can't come to the group, or are too shy to come, they still benefit from this group

because the information and pamphlets shared within the group are spread far and wide by the group members. Many of those who come each week remember all too well how painful it is to feel out of touch, to feel isolated and lacking in confidence. They know how easy it is for any isolated person to lose their social skills, to feel you can't do anything.

With all the talking and planning and decision making that goes on in this group, there are endless opportunities for group participants to strengthen both their cultural identity and their social skills, and to do this naturally and meaningfully. As social skills are restored, people feel a new sense of power and a strong desire to pass on what they have learnt to others. They say that it is the knowledge and confidence they get from this group that helps them to re-connect Kooris to each other, to their culture and to the wider society.

As well as being an information source, the group brings families together. It has a very strong family focus and so encourages all the parents and children involved, including non-Koori parents, to feel welcome and part of the Koori community. Children's involvement is seen as an especially important way for young people to learn about traditional crafts and their Koori heritage. For the children, as for everyone belonging to this group, they now have a special place of their own where they can concentrate on remembering their Dreaming.

The special features of the Koori Art Group are well encapsulated in the concept of BELONGING. This adult education course admirably demonstrates this aspect of Good Practice Curriculum in action because it:

- creates a place where Koori people feel comfortable, confident and strong, both as individuals and as a community
- sees art as a powerful means for Kooris to express and share their sense of identity
- provides a visible and active presence of present-day Koori communities and culture in this area by the sea, a living link to the extensive Koori communities that once flourished here for thousands of years.

Educational Characteristics

Philosophy

Because Kooris feel safe and comfortable coming to this group, they see the Community House as a meeting place, a resource centre, somewhere they can get help for a wide range of day-to-day matters such as housing, health, income, food, domestic violence, education and employment. The success of this group, and the fact the Koori participants feel it's a place where they'll get support for taking action against discrimination and injustice, highlights the close connection between offering educational programs and needing to offer outreach support for participants' daily experiences of prejudice and other social problems.

Whilst a Koori Art Co-op has been developed, the Hastings House Management Committee, the House Co-ordinator and the Koori Art Group all feel strongly that it's time there was a Koori Co-op in the area to provide a range of outreach support services, the human support services that cannot be adequately or properly provided by an educational program.

Aims

To preserve Koori culture

To foster self-esteem by focusing on the Koori participants' own tribal backgrounds

To demonstrate a range of drawing, painting and other art techniques for expressing this cultural journey

To promote enterprise development

To encourage local and surrounding Kooris to use the community house and its facilities.

Development stage

This group has been running for three years.

Length

On average, 3 hours per week all year, except school holidays.

Mode

Face-to-face: ✓
1:1: ✓
Group: ✓
Distance:
Self-access: ✓

Prerequisites

Anyone with Koori heritage and a willingness to share responsibility for group affairs.

Content and Methodology

First of all, the participants research their own hereditary myths and totems. It is from this research that the art studies follow, with the tutor providing a wide range of techniques via demonstrations, examples, books and magazines. Occasionally, trips

are made to galleries or exhibitions to study the work of other Aboriginal artists. Using a process of co-operation, the group then chooses designs for both individual and group work. Often the participants integrate their personal art interpretations of their tribal cultures into a collective work, such as a mural or very large painting, incorporating each individual contribution into the overall total design.

Many techniques as well as drawing and painting are introduced - to date, there's been leatherwork, leadlighting, screenprinting and woodwork. The techniques learnt are used to make a wide range of goods, including headbands, pen-holders, table mats and wall hangings. The group's success as painters has lead to plans for publishing a children's activity book and a lavishly illustrated children's book, both based exclusively on Koori designs and stories. Investigations into publication alternatives are currently under way.

The group works as a Koori Art Co-op known as the Karla Koori Co-op. It takes part in local events such as the Hastings Day Festival and Elderly Citizens' Week where Co-op members exhibit and sell their work. Last year, the group organised an extremely successful Koori festival, the Awara ("by the sea") Festival, featuring dancers, bands, storytelling, bush tucker and face painting as well as numerous Koori artists.

The art group is very keen to make itself known to as many in the Koori community as possible. It is very keen to involve as many Kooris as possible in the art program, the decision making and group projects that benefit the whole community.

Competencies/Expected Learning Outcomes

- Re-connection with Koori people, communities, culture and heritage
- Visible competence in a range of artistic skills
- The production of works of art for exhibition and sale
- Participation in local, regional and statewide cultural events.

Assessment Criteria, Methods and Tasks

The production and display of chosen art works is the best evidence of educational and artistic success as well as the noticeable increase in self-confidence that is obvious when the group is preparing for public showings.

Reporting and Certification

No certificates are provided. The art work itself provides the most powerful record of the participants' achievements. It can readily be used as evidence of prior learning for employment and educational purposes, as can students' enrolment records with ACFE.

Accreditation status

This course is not accredited, but the group is about to undertake an accredited program in Small Business Management. It is unlikely that the community would have considered doing such a course had it not been for the pathways created by the Koori Art Workshop and the confidence and skills it and other House programs have provided.

CBT/CBL Compatibility

This is not applicable as, currently, there is no need for this course to be documented in a formal way that is tied to accreditation.

Pathways

This course:

- provides a stepping stone to employment
- serves as a contact point for people seeking Koori storytellers for school programs and local festivals
- introduces participants to a range of appropriate educational choices and pathways, both in the House and in the wider educational community.

Evaluation

At the end of each term, the House Co-ordinator visits the group to hear participants' views on the past term and their preferences for the next. The group, on its own without the tutor there, decides whether to continue learning in the same area or whether to take a new direction. As well, individual participants know they can approach the House Co-ordinator at any time, and they do, to notify her of any problems, difficulties, suggestions.

GOOD PRACTICE CRITERIA

Why

Individual fulfilment: ✓
Material sufficiency: ✓
Cultural belongingness: ✓
Social justice: ✓
National wealth: ✓
Global awareness: ✓
Other: Reconciliation of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people: ✓

What

Wisdom, not just information: ✓
Bodies of knowledge, not just facts: ✓
Crafts, not just skills: ✓
Sensitivity, not just behavioural acts: ✓
Values, not just attitudes: ✓
Rigorous thinking, not just flexibility: ✓

Social contextualizing: ✓
Inclusiveness-perspectives, content, practitioners: ✓
Demystification: ✓
Community development: ✓
Multi-discursiveness: ✓
Innovation in response to socio-economic changes: ✓

How

Fosters empowerment/co-existence/enablement: ✓
In whose interests?: ✓
Self-direction & autonomy and co-operation & community: ✓
Student involvement-decision-making & on-going evaluation: ✓
Compatibility between publicity and learning taking place: ✓
Sufficient, fair, valid, reliable assessments: ✓
Recognition of prior learning: ✓

Student Profile

Reasons for enrolling

- To explore learning abilities and artistic talents
- To belong to a learning group that is supportive and friendly
- To strengthen social skills.

Reasons enrolling for now

The group continues to offer cultural support and new educational possibilities.

Age/Life stage

16-60's, from teenagers to elders.

Gender

Women and men, with a majority of women.

Ethnicity/Cultural background

Koori.

Language

English-speaking.

Educational background

A wide range is represented.

Residence

Hastings/Rosebud/Mornington Peninsula area.

Other

Many of the participants have undertaken previous programs at the House which include First Aid Programs, Sewing, Chinese Cooking and Leadlighting.

Administration and Resources

Provider

Hastings Community House

Address

15 Marine Parade, Hastings
PO Box 28, Hastings 3915

Fax

Nil

Contacts

Julie Hillier, House Co-ordinator
Steve Walsh, Koori Program Officer (Moe ACFE Office: (051) 276 000)

Policy factors

This program complements other Victorian initiatives in Koori adult education, the majority of which are designed and organised by Koori providers for Koori students in Koori settings. It fits within the framework of both the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy and the Victorian Koori Education Policy. The national policy aims to make improvements in four main areas - increasing involvement in decision making, increasing quality of access, increasing participation and enabling equitable and appropriate educational outcomes.

Funding source

Southern Westernport Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) Region through the National Aboriginal and Islander Language and Literacy Strategy Funding. The venue is provided by Mornington Peninsula Shire Council and the House Co-ordinator is funded by Health and Community Services.

Cost to student

Service fee.

Copyright

Clarification is still being sought on copyright matters relating to the artists' work.

Staffing

1 General Art Tutor (Non-Aboriginal) (Marg Jacob)
1 Art Tutor (Aboriginal) (Bea Edwards)
Other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members of the community interested in sharing their talents
1 Koori Program Officer
1 House Co-ordinator.

Texts

Art books, catalogues and magazines.

Equipment and facilities

Workroom, Art Materials, Storage Space, Telephone.

Physical constraints and solutions

Limited space, a restricted budget for equipment, no video or fax machine, minimal storage facilities, no lock-up room and no display area reduce the scope of what can be achieved. The group partly solves the display problem by regularly exhibiting in a range of places outside the House.

LITERACY AND COMMUNITY DECISION MAKING

LITERACY AND SELF-ADVOCACY

Glenroy Adult Literacy and Community Learning Centre

"Students need to learn to choose, to take responsibility, to develop independence. For many, it's the first time in their lives they are making decisions of their own, on their own, about their lives."

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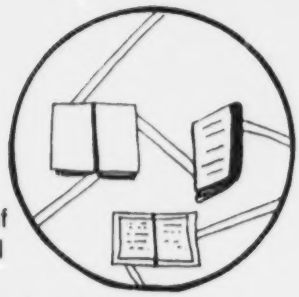


"Practising the concepts of choice"

Above all else, the Glenroy Adult Literacy and Community Learning Centre is committed to putting into daily practice that most enduring of adult learning principle that "people learn best when they have control over their learning". For the staff there, the word "control" spans a broad range, encompassing participation not only in classroom matters but in the running of the organisation as a whole. This is not something new: this Centre situated in the northern Melbourne suburb of Glenroy has a long tradition of promoting self management.

It was to this end, in 1990, when the program had to move from its then host, the Glenroy Library, that literacy students with the Glenroy program were encouraged and resourced to actively participate in the decision making around becoming an autonomous organisation. A major aspect of this participation involved collectively developing the new Centre's own legal constitution and management structure.

This encouragement and resourcing of students continues to this day, most noticeably and explicitly in its Literacy and Community Decision Making Course which has been designed to assist the Centre's students in decision making affecting their learning. This course is a practical way of enacting theory. It offers students appropriate educational strategies for developing the confidence and the competence to be genuinely able to be involved in the complex decision making affecting the Centre as well as the ability to transfer this knowledge into different aspects of their everyday life. These strategies are fully described in publicity about the Centre, and are clearly linked to the six major objectives which are outlined in these information sheets .

Although these six objectives are listed in the course profile below, it is worth reproducing them again in this introduction because they encapsulate so well the scope and ethos of the course. The six major objectives are:

(1) to develop confidence and competence in students' abilities to make decisions outside the family or the familiar;
(2) to develop an understanding of what it means to manage a community based program that receives government funds;
(3) to demystify the conventions of formal meetings;
(4) to develop the ability of student members of the Management Collective to effectively plan, oversee and evaluate the centre's policy, activities and service delivery;
(5) to extend and develop students' knowledge, experience and skills in organising program activities; and
(6) to broaden participants' experience of decision making and self advocacy.

The mention of "self advocacy" provides the perfect opportunity to introduce the other Glenroy course that makes up this story of curriculum for student empowerment. It is the Literacy, Numeracy and Self Advocacy Course for people with mild intellectual disabilities, also profiled below. It is a most fitting companion to the Literacy and Community Decision Making Course because of the emphasis it also places on students making and practising choices.

Self advocacy is implicit in the approach to English language and literacy learning taken by the Glenroy Adult Literacy and Community Learning Centre in all its

classes, occasionally being made explicit when the need arises. The teachers at Glenroy believe, however, that it is necessary to make this vitally important aspect of the course even more **explicit** when developing curriculum for students with mild intellectual disabilities.

Many students with mild intellectual disabilities are coping with major changes in their lives resulting from the closure of large institutions. As well, others are grappling with the consequences of being dependent on their families or carers. In both cases, few have had the opportunity to make their own decisions. Moreover, in our society, the ability to read and write with confidence is consummate with having more access to information and potential resources, and thus, the potential to have more power. Whilst recognising the strengths and experiences of individual students, it is also acknowledged that generally people with intellectual disabilities are the least powerful and have the least access to information and resources. Consequently, they are the most vulnerable to having their rights and responsibilities usurped.

For all these reasons, the teachers at Glenroy believe, a "positive" pedagogical model of literacy that challenges oppression must resource and affirm the efforts of people with intellectual abilities to stand up for their rights. This means assisting students to develop ways of having more control over their lives and learning. Yet, for people who have little experience of making decisions, of having rights or responsibilities or of holding opinions, these are difficult concepts to grasp.

With this in mind, the teachers at Glenroy explain, it is therefore necessary to develop these concepts in ways which can be understood by people with intellectual disabilities. As well as developing understandings and skills, it is also important, as the success of this course demonstrates, to show students what the concepts and skills are for and to provide opportunities for practising and testing them out. This requires an **explicit** rather than an implicit approach in an atmosphere where choice and opinion are intrinsic features of the curriculum.

This approach begins from the moments the students come in contact with the Centre. For example, students with mild intellectual disabilities must choose to join the Literacy, Numeracy and Self Advocacy course, and they must be able to justify their choice, that is, to say why they want to come. It is not sufficient to come because somebody else might want them there. Again, they have the option of enrolling in a computer class as well, but they must consciously choose to take this course, giving their own reasons why. It is because the practice of choice is seen as central to self advocacy that opportunities for learning to choose are created whenever and wherever possible, and as often as possible.

The Glenroy Centre understands very well the connection between curriculum objectives, the quality of teaching and curriculum outcomes. As one staff member expressed this so succinctly "good practice comes from good practitioners". Consequently, the Centre takes great care in choosing and resourcing its staff and, in keeping with its own educational policies and practices, it is very explicit about the values and behaviours it expects, and that students can expect, in the Glenroy Team. An excerpt from the ***1994 Year Book*** in the section called "More About Our Centre" captures this well. It is headed *"Qualities We Are Looking For When Recruiting Team Members"* and reads:

A person who identifies with the issues and experiences of people living or working in the Glenroy/Broadmeadows area. In particular, he or she:
** has an understanding of and a commitment to Social Justice principles - equity, access, participation and recognition of rights*
** is aware of and has a commitment to Equal Opportunity: that is, believes that no person should be discriminated against on the grounds of age, medical record, physical, mental or intellectual disability, marital status, religion, sexual preference, trade union activity, nationality or ethnicity e.g, will encourage respect for both genders and support women's right to emancipation; will encourage respect for diversity of cultures and different world views*
** is committed to supporting students to challenge the discrimination they encounter in their lives*
** respects a person's right to privacy and treats information obtained in the course of their work as confidential.*

A teacher whose pedagogical position is one of a facilitator who resources students to enable them to take more control over their own learning:
** sees adult literacy and basic education as essentially for self and group empowerment and emancipation - rather than seeing it as merely functional to meet employment or government needs*
** has an understanding and commitment to adult learning principles*
** rejects the deficit model of education that sees students as lacking and adopts a model that values and affirms students' experiences and prior learning, sees students as "whole" people in the context of a life of many facets and responsibilities.*

It is important to stress that this statement of principles, taken word for word from the ***1994 Year Book***, looks much better in its original context. In the original, photos of people who work at Glenroy sit in the midst of the print, putting faces to the abstract notion of "person" or "teacher", bringing the words "access" and "participation" to life. In this acknowledgment that everyone's contribution matters that no one should remain "faceless", in the very process of producing the Year Book itself, a team effort of staff, students and volunteers from start to finish, the exercise of choice is foregrounded. And it is in every aspect of its work. The Glenroy Adult Literacy and Community Learning Centre practises what it preaches.

The special features of the Literacy/Decision Making/Advocacy courses are well encapsulated in the concept of EXPLICITNESS. These adult education courses admirably demonstrate this aspect of Good Practice Curriculum in action because they:

- state their educational aims, processes and philosophies overtly and clearly
- place a high priority on students being able to name their own learning priorities and achievements
- see, articulate and strengthen the connections between education, everyday life, the local community and society at large.

Literacy and Community Decision Making Educational Characteristics

Philosophy

An axiom of adult learning is that people learn best when they have control over their own learning. It is quite common to hear of negotiated curricula where students are involved in some sort of dialogue with their teachers about day to day issues in choosing subject material and classroom organisation.

At Glenroy the staff believe that this notion of student control is insufficient; rather they see control over one's learning as also involving decision making about the organisation's management and policy issues and engaging in the broader literacy debates. Thus it has been seen as crucial to devise appropriate strategies to resource literacy students to develop their confidence so they can be actively involved in the complex decision making affecting the Centre.

Aims

To encourage students to engage in broader decision making about their own learning and to use this experience as a stepping stone to involvement in community activities, both inside and outside the Glenroy Literacy Centre

To develop students' understanding of what it means to manage a community based program that receives government funds

To demystify the conventions of formal meetings

To develop the ability of members of the Management Collective to effectively plan, oversee and evaluate the Centre's policy, activities and service delivery

To extend and develop students' knowledge, experience and skills in organising program activities

To broaden participants' experience of decision making and self advocacy.

Development stage

This course is in its fifth year.

Length

The regular workshops and working parties that constitute this course are determined and guided by the nature of the Centre's activities at any particular time.

Mode

Face-to-face: ✓
1:1: ✓
Group: ✓
Distance:
Self-access:

Prerequisites

None.

Content and Methodology

The range of course content and course activities is both comprehensive and extensive.

A major feature of the Literacy and Community Decision Making course is its *flexibility*. Different participants need support and teaching at different times, depending on their experience, availability and areas of interest and responsibility. Moreover, there are "peak periods" of activities, decision making and accountability that require more intensive input. Accordingly, workshops, working parties and professional development are held when necessary rather than at a set time or for a set length each week. Students' prior learning and experiences are identified and incorporated into all learning activities.

In addition there are times when support and teaching are provided on an individual basis. Although this is seen as a smaller part of the course, it is a vital component nevertheless.

Students are encouraged to voice their opinions, about their learning and the Centre in general, in different fora, be that classroom discussions, Management Collective meetings, General Meetings of the organisation, Service Agreements discussions, informal gatherings, regional meetings, Student Network meetings or workshops. In individual discussions and group workshops, the course tutor works with participants to identify elements of their experiences and skills that are valuable for participating in the management and organisation of the Centre. Students are encouraged and supported to take on tasks and responsibilities involved in running the Centre.

Workshops are conducted to look at matters like:

- what a Management Collective is, including concepts of hierarchy, non-hierarchy, democracy and power
- understanding the organisation's constitution and decision making structures
- roles and responsibilities of the Management Collective
- team development
- common issues such as conflict resolution and confidentiality
- funding sources and introduction to funding requirements
- introducing and developing a basic understanding of financial systems, financial reporting and accountability.

Workshops and role plays are organised about conventional meeting procedures and related issues, for example, power in meetings, democracy and voting. Participants are encouraged and supported to get experience taking on formal roles such as taking minutes, chairing, participating in Centre meetings, discussions and working parties. Time is taken at formal meetings to clarify meeting procedure and any organisational or political issues that arise.

Workshops and planning days are held where time is taken to look at issues behind the matters on hand and the different options for dealing with them. Preparation time is made before important meetings to make sure everyone understands the purpose of the meeting, who will be attending, and to discuss, plan and practise how people might like to intervene and contribute to the debate. This also involves prior reading and the discussion of documents that will be discussed at the meetings.

Workshops are also held to look at evaluating aspects of the Centre's policy, management and plan for the future. This includes:

- evaluation of policy, programs and other activities
- preparation for Service Agreement negotiations with ACFE, DEET, local government and other funding bodies
- developing a three-year plan
- setting priorities
- ways of addressing the needs of target groups.

Participants are encouraged to work in small groups/working parties to take on aspects of responsibility, such as:

- preparing agendas
- preparing and mailing out invitations
- arranging guest speakers
- preparing slides and projector
- chairing the Annual General Meeting (AGM), General Meeting, Management Collective meetings
- organising promotion at the AGM re local issues
- developing posters and fliers to advertise activities
- providing refreshments for different meetings
- getting rooms ready for meetings
- organising and providing childcare at different events held at the Centre
- developing leaflets about the Centre
- contributing ideas and commenting on a logo for the Centre
- speaking on radio about literacy or the Centre
- organising and taking part in interviews with local newspaper journalists
- organising and staffing a publicity table in the local shopping centre as part of "Community Day" promoting literacy and the Centre
- speaking at Service Club dinners
- speaking to different classes about the work of the Management Collective, excursions and other activities
- producing the pre-VCE curriculum document
- organising social events and fund raising activities
- interviewing and selecting new staff
- writing material for, organising and producing the "Year Book"
- learning to use the computer to produce publicity material
- dealing with priorities for future funding
- speaking with Councillors about the need for more funding
- attending regional information days and workshops
- dealing with day-to-day housekeeping issues.

Opportunities are also provided for participation in decision making outside the Glenroy Adult Literacy Centre, such as:

- attending local government meetings
- attending Regional Student Network meetings
- participating in, and helping to organise, the Student Writing Weekend and other Student Network activities
- attending ACFE Regional Planning Days
- attending Public Meetings, Public Demonstrations and Deputations to Members of Parliament.

Individual students are also supported and prepared for intervention and/or participation in other community activities, and these have included:

- management of the local childcare centre
- dealing with bureaucracies
- raising an issue not concerned with literacy or the Centre with local government and Government representatives
- participating in community petition re local bus service.

Competencies/Expected Learning Outcomes

- Increased feeling of belonging to a community based learning centre which is responsive to community and students' needs
- Increased confidence and competence in making decisions affecting one's own learning
- Increased confidence and competence in one's literacy and other areas of learning
- Increased understanding of the management and organisation of a community based program
- Contribution to the making of a viable, cohesive and active Management Collective
- Increased participation in the Centre's activities
- Development of knowledge, understandings, experience and skills that are transferable when participating and operating in other groups and fora
- Increased participation of students and community volunteers in ACFE regional activities
- Achievement of levels 2 and/or 3 of the competencies outlined in the General Curriculum Options Stream of the Certificates in Education for Adults, in particular, in the areas of collecting, analysing and organising information; planning and organising activities; communicating ideas and information; working with others and in teams; solving problems and using technology.

Assessment Criteria, Methods & Tasks

Assessment is directly connected to the variety of decision making activities in which the students are involved. For example, when organising and preparing for the most recent AGM, the two assessment tasks were:
(1) to make a list of all the tasks they believed to be important for the structure and organisation of the AGM, to decide on priorities, to volunteer to take responsibility for specific tasks at hand and to make a plan for carrying out the chosen tasks. (Some chose tasks that required them to work independently, whilst others chose group tasks.)
(2) to carry out the tasks they had assigned themselves.

Other ways of evaluating/assessing students' progress include verbal and written self-evaluation; informal discussions between workshop facilitators or Co-ordinators and individual participants; keeping a record of progress indicators; formal accreditation/ statements of attainment in reading, writing and general curriculum options of the CGEA; and group discussions in workshops.

Reporting and Certification

Students can receive formal accreditation via Statements of Attainment in reading, writing, oral communication and general curriculum options of the General Certificate of Education for Adults (CGEA). Many consider the publication of their work in the Year Book and other Centre publications to be a more valuable form of receiving

credit. Students' contributions to Centre publications as well as any Statements of Attainment for which students may choose to qualify provide documentary recognition of prior learning (RPL) for future purposes outside the Centre.

Accreditation status

Many of the areas of knowledge and skills developed in this course correspond with the competencies outlined in the Reading and Writing Stream, the Oral Communication Stream and the General Curriculum Options Stream of the accredited CGEA.

CBT/CBL Compatibility

The course documents clearly spell out expected outcomes, and how they are likely to be achieved, but they are quite deliberately not written and structured according to any one particular systemic CBT formula. Whilst they include reference to the CGEA competencies and, where appropriate, reproduce their format, the documents extend beyond that format to be able to record the full scope of what is to be achieved.

Pathways

Within the Glenroy program:

- Computers, Maths, First Aid, CGEA

Outside the program:

- Participation in community activities, such as volunteer services (meals on wheels), social action campaigns (petitions), community organisations (School Councils), spokesperson for the Centre's activities
- Education and training such as the TAFE Community Development course, the Community-Based Child Care course and SkillShare training courses.

Evaluation

A number of methods are used, including the following:

- Students are encouraged to comment verbally and in writing on what they have got out of different workshops and to suggest ways they can be improved.
- Formal feedback on workshops is provided by participants to Management Collective meetings.
- Discussions are regularly planned between the workshop presenters, facilitators, teachers and the Co-ordinators.
- Evaluation comments are included in the report to ACFE as part of the Service Agreement negotiations.
- Participants make public comments at the General Meetings of the Centre and in the Year Book.
- Analysis of recognition from outside bodies such as the local Regional Council.

Good Practice Criteria

Why

Individual fulfilment: ✓
Material sufficiency: ✓
Cultural belongingness: ✓
Social justice:✓
National wealth: ✓
Global awareness: ✓

What

Wisdom, not just information: ✓
Bodies of knowledge, not just facts: ✓
Crafts, not just skills:
Sensitivity, not just behavioural acts: ✓
Values, not just attitudes: ✓
Rigorous thinking, not just flexibility: ✓

Social contextualizing: ✓
Inclusiveness-perspectives, content, practitioners: ✓
Demystification: ✓
Community development: ✓
Multi-discursiveness: ✓
Innovation in response to socio-economic changes: ✓

How

Fosters empowerment/co-existence/enablement: ✓
In whose interests?: ✓
Self-direction & autonomy and co-operation & community: ✓
Student involvement-decision-making & on-going evaluation: ✓
Compatibility between publicity and learning taking place: ✓
Sufficient, fair, valid, reliable assessments: ✓
Recognition of prior learning: ✓

Student Profile

Reasons for enrolling

- To be effectively involved in managing the Centre and other decision-making processes affecting their learning
- To develop confidence and competence in making decisions outside the family and the familiar.

Reasons for enrolling now

The chance to get involved, in a supportive environment.

Age/Life Stage

16-60, covering the whole life span.

Gender

50% women, 50% men.

Ethnicity and Cultural background

A mixture of cultural backgrounds is represented in the group.

Language

Various.

Educational background
Students' educational backgrounds vary, including education in country of origin, with generally minimal or disrupted education.

Occupation
Occupations vary and include factory work, cleaning, travel agent, home duties, dressmaking.

Income
Incomes vary, but generally most students are on low incomes.

Residence
All students live in suburban locations.

Vocational issues
Finding and maintaining employment are key issues.

Administration and Resources

Provider
Glenroy Adult Literacy and Community Learning Centre

Address
PO Box 112, Glenroy 3046
6 Hartington St, Glenroy 3046

Fax
(03) 9300 3993

Contact
Angela Harrison and Jan Carr, Centre Co-ordinators

Policy factors
It is the policy of the Glenroy Centre that students be encouraged and resourced to actively participate in all aspects of the Centre's decision-making activities.

Funding source
Northern Region Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) Council.

Cost to student
Nil.

Staffing
1 teacher (Jan Carr)
Community volunteers.

Equipment and facilities
Computers.

Texts

The many Centre publications produced each year are used extensively in class. The principal publication is the annual Year Book, a sizeable document containing information about the Centre, the major goals for the year, photographs of interest, formal reports, reports from classes, formal meetings, video and book reviews, recipes and newspaper items about the Centre. In 1993, it was 68 pages long.

Physical constraints and solutions

The much-used building in which these courses are held is used by a variety of different agencies, often with competing philosophies and interests. A willingness and ability to work co-operatively accounts for the success of this program in creating a harmonious community setting.

Literacy, Numeracy and Self Advocacy for People with Mild Intellectual Difficulties Educational Characteristics

Philosophy

The Literacy, Numeracy and Self Advocacy teacher places a very high priority on students with mild intellectual disabilities knowing their rights and their right to choose. This includes their right to have and express their opinions, their likes and their dislikes and their right to make independent decisions about their own lives. She places considerable focus on students developing the confidence and competence to have more power and control over key aspects of their lives. A crucial factor in this development is providing the atmosphere and opportunities for explicitly presenting, demonstrating, practising, applying and evaluating the skills involved in holding opinions, making decisions and taking action.

Aims

To develop students' literacy and numeracy with an emphasis on self advocacy

To develop in students more confidence and belief in their abilities to tackle new experiences and to learn new skills

To provide an environment that enables students to comfortably and confidently tackle new activities and skills at their own pace

To develop students' confidence to implement the knowledge and skills learnt in class in their day-to-day living.

Development stage

This course is in its sixth year of operation.

Length

3 classes x 2.5 hours per week, in which entry and exit are very flexible.

Mode

Face-to-face: ✓
1:1: ✓
Group: ✓
Distance:
Self-access:

Prerequisites

The student's freely chosen agreement.

Content/Methodology

Whilst this course is largely shaped by the immediate needs of the students in the class, from time to time the teacher introduces a topic or activity with which the students may be unfamiliar so as to broaden their range of choices. There is a strong emphasis on group work. One of the most frequently recurring activities is assisting students to make their prior knowledge and skills explicit by acknowledging and

naming them. Four recent lessons, as of writing in May 1995, demonstrate the range of methods and activities that typically occur.

(1a) *Learning and Identifying Road Sign and Symbols.* The students studied road signs in class, and then went out and noted road signs in the community, with each student taking a turn at pointing out a sign and telling the rest of the class what it meant. Following this, they came back and discussed their findings with the whole group.
(1b) *Learning About Charts.* The class began by compiling a class chart, recording everyone's likes and dislikes. This prompted a discussion on the use of charts, the ways charts are used and where students encountered charts. The students then planned what train to catch for a forthcoming excursion using a train timetable chart. This chart activity served many purposes. It revealed individual tastes, both likes and dislikes, thus acting as a 'get-to-know-you' activity before leading to a more general discussion on charts.

(2) *Planning, Taking and Documenting an Excursion.* First of all, the class brainstormed the sorts of places they could visit, discussing the pros and cons of each and what considerations, such as weather, transport, food and money, had to be taken into account. A decision was made by voting. On the excursion, students were encouraged to use the camera for any shots they wished to take. After the excursion, these photos were used to assemble individual books. Everyone chose several photos, and then wrote captions or stories to accompany them. After being shown how to use the photocopier, they chose the paper they wanted, designed the front cover they wanted and compiled their own books. The students themselves suggested to write a group class story and to include that in their own individual books. They also suggested that everyone's stories be gathered together to make a class book for public use to be displayed on the Centre's bookshelf.

(3) *Compiling Students' Books.* Students were given plenty of time, several weeks, to complete their books. Once they knew how to find and use everything, they were left to proceed independently.

Students are encouraged and assured, in every activity, of teacher/tutor assistance when needed. They are always given a demonstration prior to commencing any task. They are encouraged, but never hurried, and certainly never pushed into doing something they don't want to do.

(4) *Writing Poetry.* Many students had never experienced writing poetry before. Possible themes were brainstormed and then students voted on the themes they most wanted to write about. Even when their suggestions were not chosen, students valued being able to voice their opinions through casting their vote. With each theme, students had a chance to provide input by devising sentences for the poem. The poems were made into a book that everyone could keep. Drawing on prior knowledge, they compiled the books themselves and, feeling confident of their skills, often volunteered for tasks. Students were asked whether one of the poems could be used as the group's report for the AGM. It was put to the vote and it was agreed "yes". The choice of the poem was decided in a similar way. All students participated in presenting the report at the AGM.

Competencies/Expected Learning Outcomes

- Increased confidence and competence in literacy and numeracy
- Increased access to information and resources
- Increased competence and confidence in understanding and making choices
- Increased student control over the decisions that affect their day-to-day lives and learning
- Increased ability to be more independent as a learner and as a member of society
- Improved quality of life
- Increased involvement in the activities of the Glenroy Literacy Centre and other community activities.

Assessment Criteria, Methods & Tasks

Progress is measured by students' success in managing everyday life tasks independently. Typical examples are: organising transport to a chosen destination, speaking in public, recording events and choosing between alternatives. A record is kept of these progress indicators. As well, students participate in verbal and written self-evaluation.

Reporting and Certification

The most prized form of public recognition for students is when their work - writing, stories, puzzles, poems, recipes - is included in the annually produced Year Book or other Glenroy Centre publications. Published work provides formal documentation for future education and employment purposes.

Accreditation status

There is no relevant accreditation.

CBT/CBL compatibility

Whilst a high priority is given to naming and acknowledging successful outcomes, the course is not documented according to any one systemic CBT formula.

Pathways

Within the Glenroy program:

- Community Decision Making workshops and other Centre activities
- Other numeracy, computing and literacy classes designed for students with intellectual disabilities at a more advanced level

Outside the Centre:

- Supported employment (e.g Able Services)
- TAFE pre-employment courses
- Participation in a broader range of social and community activities.

Evaluation

Time and opportunity are made available in the regular formal and informal meetings of the Glenroy Team for progress reports on each of the Centre's activities. Participants' comments, verbally or in writing, on ways this class can be improved are especially encouraged.

Good Practice Criteria

Why

Individual fulfilment: ✓
Material sufficiency: ✓
Cultural belongingness: ✓
Social justice: ✓
National wealth: ✓
Global awareness: ✓

What

Wisdom, not just information: ✓
Bodies of knowledge, not just facts: ✓
Crafts, not just skills:✓
Sensitivity, not just behavioural acts: ✓
Values, not just attitudes: ✓
Rigorous thinking, not just flexibility: ✓

Social contextualizing: ✓
Inclusiveness-perspectives, content, practitioners: ✓
Demystification: ✓
Community development: ✓
Multi-discursiveness: ✓
Innovation in response to socio-economic changes: ✓

How

Fosters empowerment/co-existence/enablement: ✓
In whose interests?: ✓
Self-direction & autonomy and co-operation & community: ✓
Student involvement-decision-making & on-going evaluation: ✓
Compatibility between publicity and learning taking place: ✓
Sufficient, fair, valid, reliable assessments: ✓
Recognition of prior learning: ✓

Student Profile

Reasons for enrolling

- To fulfil a desire to learn
- To develop confidence, to improve literacy and numeracy, and to learn about computers
- To learn how to gradually take more responsibility independently of parents or custodians
- To be able to make life decisions such as where to go and how to get there, such as where to live and how to achieve that
- To be able to carry out these decisions reasonably successfully and independently.

Reasons for enrolling now
Students welcome the chance to be able to act independently.

Age/Life stage
18-50+, covering a wide of life stages.

Gender
50% women and 50% men.

Ethnicity and Cultural background
Students come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, but predominantly English-speaking backgrounds.

Language abilities
Varying oral and written abilities in English.

Educational background
Most students have attended special schools and institutions.

Occupation
Most students have done manual work in sheltered workshops.

Income
All students are on government pensions or low incomes.

Residence
All students come from suburban locations.

Vocational issues
To gain and/or maintain supported employment.

Administration and Resources

Provider
Glenroy Adult Literacy and Community Learning Centre

Address
PO Box 112, Glenroy 3046
6 Hartington St, Glenroy 3046

Fax
(03) 9300 3993

Contact
Angela Harrison and Jan Carr, Centre Co-ordinators

Policy factors

It is the policy of the Glenroy Centre that students be encouraged and resourced to actively participate in all aspects of the Centre's decision-making activities.

Funding source

Northern Region Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) Council.

Cost to student

Nil.

Staffing

1 teacher (Danielle Ibrido)
Community volunteers.

Equipment and facilities

Computers.

Texts

The Glenroy Year Books and other Centre student publications as well as commercial publications

Physical constraints and solutions

The much-used building in which these courses are held are used by a variety of different agencies, often with competing philosophies and interests. A willingness and ability to work co-operatively accounts for the success of this program in creating a harmonious community setting.

Autonomy

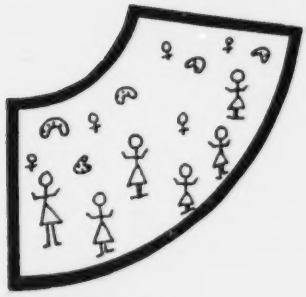
EXPLORING WOMEN'S ISSUES

Diamond Valley Learning Centre Inc

"We see people grow here."

80

"We see people grow here"



As one member of the Exploring Women's Issues Group (EWIG) at the Diamond Valley Learning Centre (DVLC) in the outer Melbourne suburb of Greensborough said so succinctly, "In this group, we can practise taking responsibility for our own lives and our own thinking." In this women's space, a living embodiment of a 16-year old, unbroken tradition of women's culture and values, where reflection on women's lived experiences takes centre stage and where there is no pre-ordained "last day" or "cut-off point", each woman truly can grow at her own pace. And growth, expansion, getting stronger, is the credo at the heart of this group which is such a fine example of multi-purpose adult education that still continues to thrive 16 years after it was born.

But this is no haphazard growth. It is a thoughtful, consciously chosen life path. The group's informality of style could be deceptive, perhaps giving the impression that this group takes a casual or ad-hoc approach towards its purpose or subject matter.

This informality is not to be mistaken for sloppiness or safety. As another member said, "You can tell the difference between this group and a group that comes together for a single-minded cause or purpose. We choose the subjects without having to be beholden to a particular set of religious or political values. Because we come from such diverse backgrounds and bring such diverse expectations, unlike a group with a more homogenous background or set of views, we don't restrict ourselves, nor are we restricted by others. If domestic violence or sex or euthanasia, or any other life and death matter comes up, we follow it right through...".

However, it is not only the urgency and daring and significance of the subject matter chosen that accounts for this group's unrivalled success. Credit must also go to the tried-and-true structures that have evolved. When asked "What advice would you give to others embarking on a project such as this?", the group singled out two key factors.

The first factor mentioned was recognising the importance of having someone as a "lynchpin". This person is not a leader in the customary sense of the word, but rather someone who carries the history, who can articulate the group's goals and values, and who can keep the group "on course" or "on track". This person acts as a reliable reference point between past, present and future. It is a role that is given, not taken, and, at any one time, it is important that any number in the group are capable of assuming this role.

The second factor highlighted was the importance of structure. A number mentioned other groups they had tried, and left, because they had been so formless and erratic: they had never known from one week to the next who would be there, when people would arrive or when they might leave, whose preference or pet topic would dominate and how many interruptions or irrelevancies would be tolerated.

In contrast, from within the Exploring Women's Issues Group structures have evolved, over time, that provide both form and flexibility. At the end of each term, all the women in EWIG map out, in advance, the program and activities for the forthcoming time. This means deciding the date, the topic and the group member

responsible for each week of the next term, and making sure that each member is provided with a copy of the term's program as soon as the planning is finalised. These responsibilities are taken very seriously, and certain ethical principles have evolved with the structures.

Respect for the work of each group member is demonstrated by a few unwritten guidelines: being punctual, keeping to the subject, taking only one short break and leaving space for all voices to be heard. Of course, these are not hard and fast. Whilst the group always tries to keep to the subject, if any member of the group has a pressing personal problem, for example, sickness in the family, the planned format for the day can be set aside and/or postponed so support can be given. It is well understood that relationships also need thoughtful attention.

A question that naturally arises is: why not meet at home? why does the Learning Centre have to be involved? The group stressed that meeting at the Learning Centre was very different from meeting in private homes.

First, through the Diamond Valley Learning Centre, the group is kept in touch with the wider community and the bigger social and political issues. Thanks to this, the womens' horizons are inevitably broadened and their participation in civic affairs increased. Second, the group, having been in existence almost as long as the Centre has, makes a unique contribution to the life of the Centre. Longstanding group members provide immediate access to the history and evolution of the Centre, as well as being an enduring case study of the powerful interplay between smaller community groups and larger ones.

Over the years, this continuous thread, this repository of local knowledge and processes, has served a number of other community functions as well : it has proved to be an effective springboard for its members moving into the public sphere, it has been a touchstone for the Centre as times and issues change, and it has provided a steady stream of far-seeing DVLC committee members.

Whilst the older women say they cannot imagine ever wanting to leave the group, this is no exclusive club. There is considerable effort put into recruiting and welcoming young women into the group, not only to ensure the group's survival but to guarantee that a diversity of views is always represented. There is no doubt that all the women see this group as saving them from the ailments associated with rigidity of mind, a proven antidote to mental illness and the very best way to safeguard against the potentially corrosive effects of ageing in isolation.

This is not to say that the group members rely on EWIG totally for mental stimulation. All the women lead full and active lives outside the group. They travel, go to live theatre and art galleries and can be seen at the football, the cricket, the races, antique shops, the casino and live musicals. No, this group is not seen or used as a substitute for living and acting in the wider world; in no way does it take the place of full engagement with all of life's challenges and struggles. Rather, it provides the fertile soil for even more vigorous growth outside the group.

The special features of the Exploring Women's Issues Group are well encapsulated in the concept of AUTONOMY. This adult education course admirably demonstrates this aspect of Good Practice Curriculum in action because it:

- demonstrates a living, working model of autonomous lifelong learning in practice

- provides opportunities for women to continuously practise taking responsibility for determining their own learning choices and outcomes by rotating leadership and discouraging dependence
- models a well tested structure that incorporates both continuity and flexibility, with the freedom to change direction, pace and focus at the slightest notice.

Educational Characteristics

Philosophy

The group is primarily concerned with the intellectual and emotional development of each woman member in the group. To achieve this, the women are all firmly committed to practices based on a "No Competition" policy. By this they mean there is no expectation or pressure to be the smartest or loudest or toughest. In other words, there is no group leader or dogma or habit that must preside, no matter what.

Whilst individual growth is certainly encouraged, it is within an ethos of being equally concerned about the social and moral consequences of individual actions on the whole group.

This co-operative approach does not mean, however, that rigour is absent. On the contrary, there are group rules or unwritten agreements that have grown out of years of experience. This "fairly regimented approach", as one member described it, ensures that the curriculum is always planned well in advance, and everyone knows exactly what to expect in the weeks ahead. The topic of the day is adhered to, with distractions or interferences discouraged. Of course, the structure is flexible enough to accommodate unexpected issues or circumstances but, generally speaking, punctuality and keeping to the subject are, with the group's consent, unobtrusively monitored.

Aims

To provide a unique women's discussion group with a commitment to personal, social, intellectual, emotional and political development

To encourage respect for others, self-confidence, self-esteem and companionship

To provide a working model of lifelong learning in practice.

Development Stage

The group is in its 16th year.

Length

2 and a half hour sessions, all year round, year in and year out, excepting school holidays.

Mode

Face-to-face: ✓
1:1: ✓
Group: ✓
Distance:
Self-access: ✓

Prerequisites

To be willing to respect the work and views of others in the group.
To agree to share responsibility for the group's affairs.

Content and Methodology

The Exploring Women's Issues Group works on a quarterly cycle, following the four terms of the school year. To allow the greatest flexibility, this group has found a

happy balance between spontaneous, on-the-spot decision-making and long-term planning. At the end of each term, this self-managing group makes arrangements for the term to come. This involves deciding the topics for each week of the forthcoming term as well as nominating which group member will be responsible for organising each week's topic and its associated activities.

Topics covered in the 16-year history of this group include subjects and issues connected with health, economics, education, religion, law, and politics. The group takes both a multi-disciplinary and a multi-perspective approach. This is evident in the range of newspaper articles, guest speakers, books, excursions and videotapes that have featured over the years. Often a class book, preferably the work of an Australian woman writer, is chosen as a focus for intensive study.

Whilst the week's designated organiser takes responsibility for the activities and initiates the discussion, all group members are encouraged to contribute regularly and often. The naming and analysis of prior learning and life experiences are given pride of place in this group.

Records are kept of each term's curriculum. For example, the program for term 4, 1994, reads:

Week 1:	Moslem Women's Issues, with a guest speaker from Jordan
Week 2:	Nutrition, with a guest speaker
Week 3:	Sexism in Language
Week 4:	Update on Women's Studies, with a guest lecturer from La Trobe University
Week 5:	Moslem Women Follow-up, with a different Moslem woman guest speaker
Week 6:	Sceptics
Week 7:	Comparative Religion, focussing on Christianity and Islam
Week 8:	End-of-year Breakup, with topical newspaper articles.

Competencies/Expected Learning Outcomes

As a group

To select and organise a term's timetable, topics, activities and guest speakers

As an individual member

To successfully plan and conduct approximately one complete two and a half hour session per term on a topic chosen from the class list

To name the educational and health benefits of belonging to a group such as this.

Assessment Criteria, Methods and Tasks

While the group sees no need for formal assessment within the group, group members place a high value on the skills learnt in the group being applicable to everyday life situations. Women in the group regularly report on milestones they have reached outside the group (eg public speaking, community participation, committee membership) that they feel would have been impossible without the apprenticeship for these roles provided by belonging to the EWIG.

Reporting and Certification

This is not relevant because certificates are neither desired nor needed.

Accreditation status

Not applicable.

CBT/CBL Compatibility

As documentation is not required for external audiences, this course is not documented to satisfy any particular systemic format. The women have developed their own informal conventions for recording course aims and outcomes.

Pathways

Many of the hundred or more women who have passed through this group believe it has given them the desire and the courage to go to more formal study, often still staying in the group or coming back to rejoin later. A number have gone on to study at La Trobe University nearby.

Evaluation

The last session of each term is always dedicated to reviewing the term just finished and, with lessons learnt fresh in mind, plans are made for the next term.

Good Practice Criteria

Why

Individual fulfilment: ✓
Material sufficiency: ✓
Cultural belongingness: ✓
Social justice: ✓
National wealth: ✓
Global awareness: ✓

What

Wisdom, not just information: ✓
Bodies of knowledge, not just facts: ✓
Crafts, not just skills:
Sensitivity, not just behavioural acts: ✓
Values, not just attitudes: ✓
Rigorous thinking, not just flexibility: ✓

Social contextualizing: ✓
Inclusiveness-perspectives, content, practitioners: ✓
Demystification: ✓
Community development: ✓
Multi-discursiveness: ✓
Innovation in response to socio-economic changes:

How

Fosters empowerment/co-existence/enablement: ✓
In whose interests?: ✓
Self-direction & autonomy and co-operation & community: ✓
Student involvement-decision-making & on-going evaluation: ✓
Compatibility between publicity and learning taking place: ✓
Sufficient, fair, valid, reliable assessments:
Recognition of prior learning: ✓

Student Profile

Reasons for enrolling

- To raise and explore in depth women's issues in a flexible and women-friendly environment
- To articulate and hear ideas, knowledge and interests pertaining to women
- To be mentally, intellectually and politically stimulated and strengthened
- To practise expressing and testing views in a safe environment
- To be challenged by diverse and different beliefs and perspectives
- To become more proficient at taking responsibility for one's own life and thinking.

Reasons for enrolling now

The group continues to fulfil a lifelong need to be continually developing intellectually.

Age/Life stage

Late 20s to early 70s, from young mothers to grandmothers of adults.

Gender

All women.

Ethnicity and Cultural background

Predominantly from an Anglo background, with a recent welcome increase in women from European backgrounds.

Language

All are competent and confident English speakers, readers and writers.

Educational background

The women represent a wide range of educational backgrounds from some secondary schooling to University degrees.

Occupation

A few are in paid or voluntary work. Most, being retired or on leave from the paid workforce, are currently in unpaid work. Occupations represented in the group include teaching, administration and small business.

Income

A wide range is represented.

Residence

All the women reside in suburban or outer suburban locations.

Vocational issues

As the majority are retired, or on leave from the paid workforce, vocational aims are not uppermost.

Administration and Resources

Provider

Diamond Valley Learning Centre Inc (DVLC)

Address

PO Box 217, Greensborough. 3088
Cr Diamond Creek and St Helena Rds, Greensborough

Fax

Nil

Contact

Sue Beshara, DVLC Co-ordinator

Policy factors

This group is living testimony to a 20-year DVLC policy on lifelong learning that prizes and advocates adults managing their own learning.

Funding sources

The students' service fee covers the cost of the utilities: there are no staffing or resource costs for the Centre.

Cost to student

A sliding scale service fee, as a contribution towards DVLC overheads, is charged.

Staffing

As this is a self-managing, fully autonomous group, all participants share responsibility for the group's teaching and learning. Hence, the group meets all its own staffing needs.

Equipment and facilities

A room at DVLC and access to video equipment.

Texts

Occasionally, a class text which is usually a novel
Continuously, current newspapers and magazine articles.

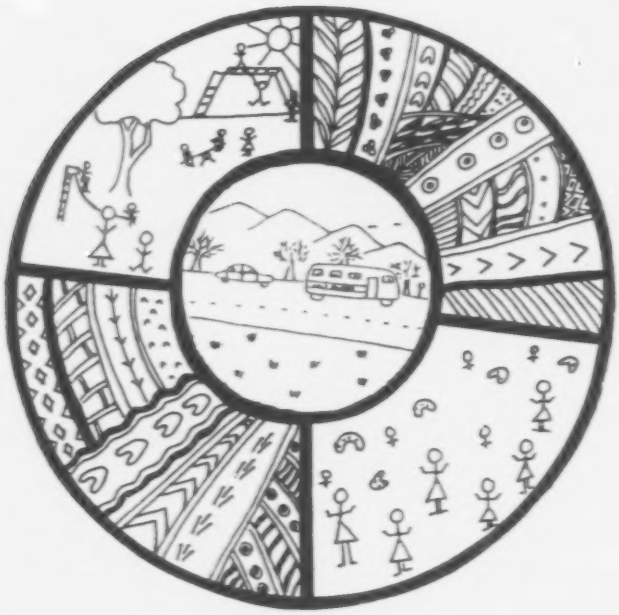
Physical constraints and solutions

Were the room bigger, the group could expand to include more than its current 16 members. On the other hand, the present size does mean each woman can contribute frequently and confidently.

Accessibility

INTRODUCTION TO TOURISM (FLEXIBLE DELIVERY)

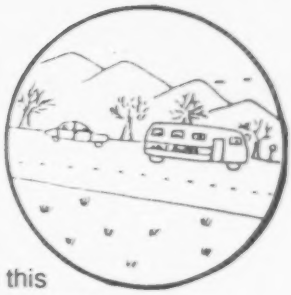
Bairnsdale Adult Community Education



"People learn best when they find out for themselves. There's a time for information-gathering, and a time for information-giving."

89

"A time for information-giving, and a time for information-gathering"



This "Introduction to Tourism" course in flexible delivery form was produced and run in rural Bairnsdale in the second half of 1994. In this situation, "flexible delivery" means a series of well-spaced class-based workshops interspersed with guided self-paced study that is undertaken away from the classroom, most commonly at home or in community research. It is based on an original, and painstakingly designed, face-to-face curriculum of the same name developed by staff at Bairnsdale Adult Community Education (BACE) three years earlier, and which had been run at BACE three times in the intervening period. The three earlier full-time courses, varying in length from 13 to 20 weeks, had been eminently successful in meeting their educational, vocational and labour market aims, providing this flexible delivery course with very sound, "tried and true" foundations on which to build.

This is not to suggest that this conversion process was a mechanistic exercise carried out in the isolation of a writer's study. Like its predecessors, it too was the result of intensive consultations, was tested in action, and thoroughly evaluated and appropriately re-designed at every stage. As might be expected, given the thorough trialling and regular revisions of the subject matter in the three-year old classroom-based tourism course, it was not so much the "what" that changed. The content topics had proved themselves to be well worth preserving and provided a firm base from which to expand. Rather it was the "how", and this, in turn, determined the "who". These consequences deserve further explanation.

First, the "how". The original course, given its classroom setting, had emphasised group work and face-to-face communication, supervised work experience placements and, where necessary, literacy and study skills support. The flexible delivery version, catering for people dispersed over a wide area for whom frequent class attendance was difficult, emphasised independent research and project work. This requiredstating from the outset that reasonably sophisticated literacy abilities were pre-requisites. Of course, good organisational and time management skills, whilst not specified as pre-requisites, are also a great advantage in a course of this kind.

The nature of the course, with its literacy and motivational demands, inevitably made a difference to the "who". The earlier courses, funded through Commonwealth Growth grants, had been funded, and hence designed, for registered, unemployed adults. The students who had attended these courses had been predominantly women in their 20's and 30's, often with minimal formal schooling, many with little or no prior employment experience, generally looking to fit into something familiar in a close-to-home setting that would allow them to remain in their own community.

The flexible delivery course, on the other hand, with a policy of open eligibility to all, spelling out quite clearly that no specific educational standard was required to enrol in the course, turned out to attract quite a different group. It attracted older people, mostly women over 40 with considerable life experience and confident of working on their own. Most had arrived at a crossroads in their lives and were now hungry to embark on something new, to move into new fields, to try going it alone. They were,

on the whole, quite eager to return to study or to start their own small businesses.

Given the fact that this course includes print-based materials, a literacy pre-requisite did have to be specified, so those who enrolled did have well developed literacy and study skills.

A key lesson learnt from this experiment, not a new one but one easily forgotten, is that different delivery modes attract and favour different participants. It almost goes without saying that no one learning mode satisfies all people completely, and that the more modes available the greater the scope of educational and vocational needs met. The ideal situation, of course, is one where learners can choose the mode that best meets their needs. Mindful of this, the designers of this course in flexible delivery mode made ease of access its top priority, being especially attentive to course features that create barriers. That awareness is certainly evident in the course, and it provides a good illustration of the importance of course design in attempting to increase accessibility. Three aspects are particularly notable.

First, all the audio-visual resources recommended in the course are available for student perusal at BACE. They are all user-friendly and well sequenced, featuring current, largely Australian, content. The videotapes referred to in the course guides, easily obtainable and economically priced, were deliberately chosen to minimise physical, linguistic and conceptual barriers to participation, whilst simultaneously minimising costs. This last matter is something of vital concern to small centres that wish to provide these resources as a reference node for local residents wanting to do the course.

Second, the other principal resources advocated by the course - local community networks, local materials and local know-how - are also within easy reach for students, generally free, hopefully user-friendly, and certainly relevant and up-to-date. Although it was neither possible nor desirable to exclude all printed texts, expensive, hard-to-find, hard-to-follow reference texts have been deliberately avoided.

Third, though print materials do form an integral part of the course, inevitably making literacy demands on the student reader and writer, a deliberate attempt has been made to write and present the materials in as lucid and friendly and coherent a way as possible. The materials demonstrate that complex ideas can be expressed simply without becoming simplistic. The emphasis, at every stage, is always on opening up possibilities for students, on opening out the learning process, on the concept of open-ness overall.

But this consideration for individual convenience and preferences and strengths does not mean that the individual student is left to struggle on alone. Quite the opposite.

Certainly there is a high premium placed on individual effort but it is always supported, at key moments, by face-to-face workshops where all the course participants come together. For those strategically timed gatherings, group activities have been specifically designed to provide information, discussion, peer encouragement and authentic feedback. Thus, the balance between self-sufficiency and collaboration, between autonomy and co-operation, between gathering information and giving information are all maintained in a very finely balanced equilibrium. In every sense, this course provides the best of both worlds - the

dynamic exchange of ideas that comes with group learning and the control over time and place that come with self-paced, home-based study.

The special features of the flexible delivery Tourism course are well encapsulated in the concept of ACCESSIBILITY. This adult education course admirably demonstrates this aspect of Good Practice Curriculum in action because it:

- provides course materials that are presented in an uncluttered manner, that are lucidly sequenced and where print and graphics complement each other
- recommends resources and references that are low-cost and readily available
- blends the unique and best features of both group work and self-reliant study, not restricting itself exclusively to one methodology or the other.

Educational Characteristics

Philosophy

The course writer believes it is very important for people to be able to see from the very beginning what they will learn. She believes that potential students are entitled to see what lies ahead before they commit. This means that choice is built in from the potential student's very first encounter, and the decision to proceed or not is based on the clearly stated, overtly declared, knowledge laid out in the course materials.

Because the course writer is convinced that people learn best by having experiences rather than only sitting in classrooms, individually managed projects provide the central focus for this course. These project tasks require that students go out into their own community, obliging them to get to know and use their local resources. By making these set tasks adaptable and available to all, the methodology truly acknowledges the prior experiences of all participants.

Aims

To provide an overview of the Australian tourism industry with particular emphasis on jobs in the industry and the potential of the participants' local area for tourism

To provide an overview of the tourism industry for untrained people currently working in tourism

To prepare participants for obtaining jobs in tourism

To familiarise participants with accredited courses in tourism

To give a tourism perspective to participants considering setting up their own small business operations.

Development stage

Whilst this course shares the same objectives and many of the same topics as the original Tourism and Hospitality course which was conducted 3 times over 3 years at BACE in a face-to-face, classroom setting, very little of the written material for this course was transferred in its original format from that course. Material for one of the workshops and some of the Tutor Guide were incorporated, but materials and activities for the other two workshops, the Student Guide and much of the Tutor Guide were designed and written especially and specifically for flexible delivery mode. The flexible delivery conversion of the original Tourism course, both the workshops and the self-paced study guides, was trialled as a pilot flexible delivery course late in 1994.

Length

The course takes approximately 80 hours to complete, consisting of attendance at 3 workshops (2 full-day and 1 half-day) and the completion of 10 self-paced modules. As a general guide, participants are expected to complete all modules within 3 months of commencing the first workshop.

Mode

Face-to-face: ✓ (two and a half days' workshop attendance)
1:1: ✓
Group: ✓

Distance:✓
Self-access: ✓

Prerequisites

Suitability for entry to the course is determined by interview. While no specific education standard is required, a level of literacy equivalent to Level 3 on the Interim Literacy Course Matrix (ILCM) is a pre-requisite.

Content and Methodology

This flexible delivery course is designed to be delivered as a series of 3 well-spaced workshops interspersed with 10 guided self-paced modules. The course materials could also be used to deliver face-to-face on a full or a part time basis.

The course materials consist of a Tutor Guide and a Student Guide. The Tutor Guide contains the following information: a course outline, course objectives, a timetable for course organisation, a list of essential resources, workshop notes and a Tutor pack of selected readings. The Student Guide, doubling as a workbook, consists of a course outline, workshop information and the ten self-paced modules. Each module in the Student Guide outlines the approximate amount of time to be spent on it, what will be learnt, the resources to be used, the reading required, the tasks (1-4) to be carried out and a checklist for monitoring progress.

Before the flexible delivery course begins, it is the tutor's responsibility to arrange dates and guest speakers, to arrange multiple copies of resources, to decide where students can view,use and borrow resources, to organise copies of the Student Guide for each participant, to arrange times when the tutor will be available for student consultation and to let local organisations know that the course is being run.

At enrolment, the tutor provides the student with the Student Guide, gives the tutor's contact phone number and consultation times, and discusses the use of resources - availability, location, times of use. Resources may be sent or made available at a range of locations. The tutor is available on each of the workshop days for individual assistance, as well as at pre-arranged consultation times. Students are encouraged to draw on their prior learning and experiences, to share ideas with each other and to enquire about other services, such as open learning units or return to study programs, that might be of assistance.

This course covers the following 10 topics:

- an overview of the Australian tourism industry
- personal and interpersonal skills required in the tourism industry
- customer relations
- knowledge, including natural features, of the local area
- knowledge of other popular Australian destinations
- preparation of tour itineraries
- preparation and presentation of tour commentaries
- problem solving skills in a variety of tour situations
- Occupational Health and Safety practices and procedures
- the career opportunities and pathways available within the tourism industry.

The ten modules each focus on one of these topics. The course begins with Workshop One. Modules 1-4 are completed away from class after Workshop One and before Workshop Two. Workshop Three takes place after modules 5-10 have been

completed, at the end of the course. Workshop One covers Return to Study and an Overview of the Tourism Industry, Workshop Two concentrates on Tour Guiding, and Workshop Three acts as a showcase for Student Commentaries and Presentations.

Competencies/Expected Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- describe the broad features of the Australian Tourist Industry
- name the career opportunities and pathways available within the tourism industry
- recognise and apply good customer relations
- describe and apply relevant Occupational Health and Safety practices and procedures
- research and prepare tour itineraries
- research, prepare and present tour commentaries
- provide basic information on popular Australian tourist destinations
- provide basis information on a specific area of Australia to visitors.

Assessment Criteria, Methods and Tasks

The following task requirements are included in the Student Guide:

- keeping a detailed Course Diary, in which hours, dates, contacts, interviews, job information and thoughts are recorded
- completing all assigned Module tasks (20+) in the manner specified in the Student Guide
- preparing, displaying and presenting, at Workshop Three, the kit of tourism materials completed as tasks for Modules 5-10
- participating in the evaluation of others' Workshop Three presentations via an Evaluation Sheet designed for this purpose

Reporting and Certification

A BACE Certificate is presented to students who attend all 3 workshops and who complete the assigned tasks. This course certificate provides documentary evidence and recognition of prior learning (RPL) for future employment and study purposes.

Accreditation status

At the time of writing in April 1995, this course had not been accredited. The BACE program co-ordinator is, however, in the process of researching and considering viable accreditation alternatives with a view to choosing the most appropriate.

CBT/CBL Compatibility

The course materials have deliberately incorporated many of the features typical of curriculum written to a systemically endorsed CBT format, with a special emphasis on specifying expected student outcomes.

Pathways

As a pre-vocational course, it prepares students to undertake accredited courses in tourism. As well, students are trained either to gain employment in the tourism industry (such as being a tour guide), or to set up their own small business operations (such as running a craft shop or a Bed and Breakfast (B&B) or making videos for the tourist market).

Evaluation

Evaluation for the pilot course occurred via verbal review with course participants both mid-way through the course and at the end. As well, students were required to keep course diaries and to fill in evaluation sheets, both of which were major contributors to the final course review and revision.

Good Practice Criteria

Why

Individual fulfilment: ✓
Material sufficiency: ✓
Cultural belongingness: ✓
Social justice: ✓
National integrity: ✓
Global awareness: ✓

What

Wisdom, not just information:
Bodies of knowledge, not just facts: ✓
Crafts, not just skills:
Sensitivity, not just behavioural acts ✓
Values, not just attitudes:
Rigorous thinking, not just flexibility: ✓

Social contextualizing: ✓
Inclusiveness-perspectives, content, practitioners: ✓
Demystification: ✓
Community development: ✓
Multi-discursiveness: ✓
Innovation in response to socio-economic changes: ✓

How

Fosters empowerment/co-existence/enablement: ✓
In whose interests?: ✓
Self-direction & autonomy and co-operation & community: ✓
Student involvement-decision-making & on-going evaluation: ✓
Compatibility between publicity and learning taking place: ✓
Sufficient, fair, valid, reliable assessments: ✓
Recognition of prior learning: ✓

Student Profile

Reasons for enrolling

- To find out about running a tourist business
- To find out more about the local community (the East Gippsland area) from a tourism perspective
- To learn how to set up a small tourist business or how to diversify an existing business.

Reasons for enrolling now

The open eligibility of the course, the freedom to undertake study and this convenient and minimally disruptive form of delivery were all given as reasons.

Age/Life stage

40+, mid-life and with diminished childcare responsibilities, the students who enrolled in this course were looking at employment options and opportunities.

Gender

10 women and 2 men.

Ethnicity and Cultural Background

Almost exclusively Anglo background, generally reflecting the composition of the local community.

Language abilities

All are competent readers, writers and speakers in English.

Educational background

All have attended, and many have completed, secondary school.

Occupation

A wide range of occupational backgrounds, including an artist and a bus driver, was represented.

Income

A wide range of incomes was represented.

Residence

All students resided in rural locations, coming predominantly from the towns of Lakes Entrance, Paynesville and Bairnsdale.

Vocational issues

All were seeking employment in tourism.

Administration and Resources

Provider

Bairnsdale Adult Community Education Inc. (BACE)

Address

PO Box 633, Bairnsdale. 3875
Dalmahoy St, Bairnsdale. 3875

Fax

(051) 9521 773

Contact

Peter Millard, Program Co-ordinator

Policy factors

It is Office of Training and Further Education (OTFE) policy to encourage the provision of flexible delivery options.

Funding source

The original, face-to-face classes were funded through Commonwealth Growth funds. This flexible delivery course was funded by ACFE as part of the "Flexible Delivery Project".

Cost to student

To date, nil. In the future, this course may be fee-for-service.

Staffing

Design Phase

1 course co-ordinator (Peter Millard)
1 curriculum writer (Lynda Leatham)
1 former course tutor as content consultant (Ian Smith)
1 TAFE curriculum adviser, especially with regard to CBT matters
1 instructional designer

Delivery

1 course co-ordinator
1 course tutor/workshop leader (Lynda Leatham/Ian Smith)

Equipment and facilities

Videocassette recorder; Classroom

Texts

An Introduction to Tourism: Tutor Guide
An Introduction to Tourism: Student Guide
Brochures, fact sheets and other resources produced by the tourist industry and by agencies in the local community
Videotapes as listed in the Tutor Guide

Physical constraints and solutions

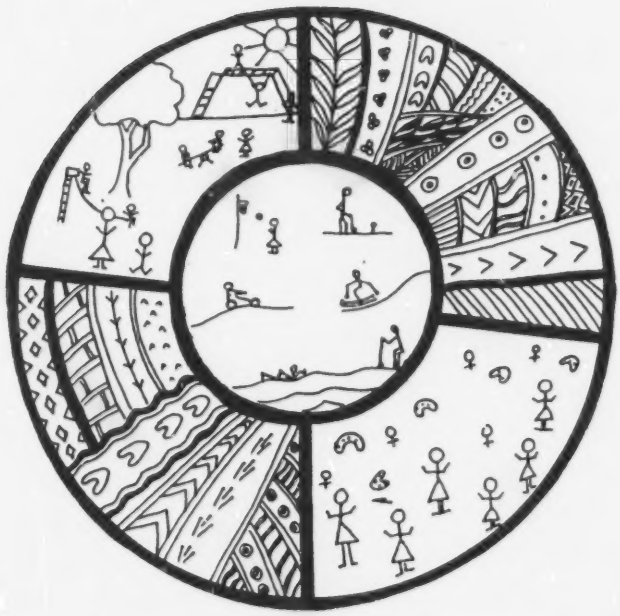
An insufficient number of the videotapes listed as required viewing, and located in only one Centre, meant students could not borrow them from the Centre for home use; instead, they had to come to the Centre for viewing. The provision of multiple copies of the required tapes in a range of easily accessible venues will overcome this problem in the future.

Copyright

Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFEB)

APPLIED SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

Council of Adult Education



"We are what we think. Nobody disputes or doubts that physical skills have to be practised, but too few people realise that mental skills also need to be practised."

"We are what we think"

Sport psychology, says Paulette Mifsud, tends to be falsely and solely associated in the popular mind with elite athletes. It is a common misconception, and one she regrets, that such rarefied techniques could only be of use to top-rating professionals. Paulette is determined to reverse this view. She has set herself the challenge of making the techniques which are characteristic of Applied Sport Psychology better understood and more accessible, not only to amateur sports people, players and coaches, but also to performing artists and the community as a whole.

Paulette's adult education short course called "Applied Sport Psychology: The Winning Edge", held at the Council of Adult Education (CAE) in the centre of Melbourne, introduces people to the role and significance of cognition and performance in behaviour and performance. It teaches skills for improving performance through improving cognitive techniques. It has been specially designed to provide a perfect opportunity for finding out about applied sport psychology in a safe setting and attracts people of all ages and from all walks of life.

So often, Paulette has found, the very word "psychology" arouses fear or suspicion in people. To counteract those feelings, this short course is offered under a friendly title in a public setting, deliberately presenting itself in a "user-friendly" way, urging people to see and experience first hand the accessibility and relevance of psychology for everyday people in everyday life. The thought Paulette has put into designing her course shows she knows how apparently simple actions can have far-ranging consequences.

Consider, for example, the title of the course. The word "sport" in the course title tends to dissolve initial fears that those not academically inclined might have about getting involved in a course to do with "psychology". The focus on "sport", an ordinary, familiar, socially acceptable cultural practice, promotes a willingness, Paulette observes, to join in something that doesn't sound too academic or highbrow or abstract which, as far as the student is concerned, has unforeseen far-reaching educational benefits.

The same can be said for the power of the word "applied". People respond to the promise of usefulness, and find the usefulness is broader than originally envisaged. Not only do students learn to improve their sporting or dancing performance but they also come to change their view of psychology, no longer seeing it as something alien, threatening, remote, esoteric and/or useless but as a valuable aid for a wide range of domestic and professional situations. Time and time again, Paulette witnesses how students previously quite ill-informed about the field of psychology come to see that a knowledge and practice of psychology can be beneficial not only in sport but in all aspects of living.

Paulette recognises that there are severe limitations on what can be achieved in an eight-week short course. With this in mind, she structures the course so that each successive class draws on, incorporates and reinforces the techniques learnt in earlier classes. For example, relaxation and cognitive techniques for focussing and energising are introduced early in the course so they can be regularly practised in subsequent classes. When new techniques are being introduced, discussion is always encouraged so as to connect the particular techniques in question with each

student's particular situation, both within a sporting context and beyond. Talk and rehearsal are seen as interdependent and equally important.

But isn't this methodology - consulting with students, meeting their declared needs, ensuring that success is experienced early and often, blending theory and practice - isn't this what's always been the hallmark of good adult education? Whilst these elements are to be lauded, especially in what is ostensibly a skill development program, is there anything new or distinctive in this curriculum practice?

Certainly "The Winning Edge" adult education course is a fine example of these long-held tenets, but it does add a new dimension. Paulette is a passionate believer in acknowledging the cognitive dimensions in all learning and in alerting students to this reality. This means learning to appreciate the power of the mind, learning to develop mental capacities that extend all our other capacities, learning mental techniques that overcome fatigue and any tendencies to block, tighten, narrow and avoid. This is best illustrated in her emphasis on developing the powers of imaging, or imagining, skills in which all the senses, not only sight or visualisation, are involved. Her whole course exemplifies the belief: "Positive images create positive thoughts which create positive behaviour".

It is this multi-dimensional approach, this attentiveness to the complexity of learning, no matter how apparently simple the subject matter, this interweaving of conceptual, psychological and physiological understandings and techniques, that distinguishes this course. But it is no formulaic approach. The course tutor, dedicated to trialling and evaluating some of the latest findings about how people learn, draws on a wide range of disciplines and sources for course content. The result is eight sessions, each quite different in style, sequence, activities and tone.

This course is multi-dimensional in another important respect as well, in its understanding of and response to the spread of purposes for attending an adult education class. Recognising that people come to class as multi-role individuals and learners, often simultaneously a parent and a worker and a student and a community volunteer and a performer, this course doesn't artificially separate personal, vocational, academic, social and political goals. It deliberately encompasses all these purposes, knowing that people can be involved in sport for all these reasons. It recognises and demonstrates that the aims and the techniques learnt must be able to transcend narrow definitions and false boundaries and limited perspectives. With this in mind, the weekly goals for the whole course are given to the participants on the first night of the course. The whole group discusses them, with participants invited to add any extra specific personal goals.

Students are obviously deeply satisfied by this course. Many students, finding nothing comparable to this course in their sports associations or networks, have expressed a desire to attend an Advanced Course. In fact, many of them, especially the dancers, have stated they feel this subject ought to be compulsory curriculum in dance and ballet schools where the physical realm, and not a synthesis of physical and mental domains, seems to dominate almost exclusively. Paulette is determined to give thinking its due respect and rightful place in all aspects of living.

The special features of this Applied Sport Psychology course are well encapsulated in the concept of SYNTHESIS. This adult education course admirably demonstrates this aspect of Good Practice Curriculum because it:

- attends simultaneously to students' physical, psychological, conceptual, social and vocational needs and aspirations
- draws equally on life experiences and the latest theoretical findings, blending them into a coherent educational whole
- demonstrates cogently the importance and power of understanding how thinking and behaving are so inextricably intertwined.

Educational Characteristics

Philosophy

The Applied Sport Psychology tutor fervently believes that sport psychology is relevant not only in sport settings but also in many aspects of daily life, including the workplace. For her, "sport" acts as a rich metaphor for life in general, prompting lots of lively class discussions.

Because she knows students value learning that is practical and personal and relevant to their current roles and needs, she always includes lots of activities and applications in her classes. To ensure that the applications are most useful, she makes sure that the learning environment is non-threatening by constructing a class ethos that is one of open communication and commentary, one in which everyone can express opinions freely.

Aims

To provide participants with the opportunity to learn psychological skills that enable them to perform better than in the past

To provide a non-threatening, supportive forum where participants feel at ease and discuss matters of concern. For example, a participant who loses concentration frequently, or who becomes excessively anxious prior to or during a performance, can state this and strategies for managing this situation will be developed and offered to the whole group.

Development stage

As of April 1995, this course has been run 5 times.

Length

8 weeks x 2 hours per week (evenings).

Mode

Face-to-face: ✓
1:1:
Group: ✓
Distance:
Self-access: ✓

Prerequisites

None.

Content and Methodology

All classes contain formal presentations, modelling, role plays, practice sessions and discussion. Students' prior learning is highly valued and the sharing of students' successful experiences is a fully integrated on-going feature of the curriculum.

The topics covered, week by week, are:

Week 1: Arousal and Performance: gaining an understanding of the way arousal affects performance; identifying one's own optimal arousal level; developing strategies to practise eliciting one's optimal arousal. Special attention is paid to developing an awareness of adrenalin levels and their

cognitive and physiological effects.

Week 2: Relaxation: introducing various relaxation techniques; learning how to systematically implement these techniques through a variety of experiential techniques for different situations, for example, an energising relaxation technique for performance contexts.

Week 3: Goal Setting and Motivation: increasing awareness of the principles associated with effective goal setting; developing a personal goal setting program; introducing various motivational techniques.

Week 4 (a): Imagery: providing a rationale as to why imagery is such an effective tool; developing the skills required for effective imagery,for example, to develop effective sensory awareness, vividness and controllability of an image. All the senses, not exclusively sight, are used. Special attention is given to teaching skills for unblocking.

Week 4 (b): Self Confidence: using imagery to develop self confidence.

Week 5: Cognitive Restructuring: teaching participants to have control over their thought process,for example, changing negative thoughts to positive ones, using effective thought-stopping techniques; increasing people's awareness as to theway their thinking can colour their perspective of their performance, their competitors and various competitions. Emphasis is particularly placed on practising mental skills for creating positive thoughts and images,for identifying cognitive distortion processes and for acquiring techniques for overcoming disempowering thoughts .

Week 6: Concentration and Attention: demonstrating strategies which improve one's concentration intensity and reduce concentration fatigue; increasing participants' awareness of the four different attentional styles; discussing the attentional demands required by the participants' sport and developing attentional strategies to meet these demands. The primary focus is on the skills needed for improving attentiveness, for re-focussing when tired, for diversifying the repertoire of attentional responses so as to create greater flexibility in participants' dispositional styles.

Week 7: Managing Injury: increasing participants' awareness of athletes' responses to injury and rehabilitation; increasing participants' awareness of psychological techniques which assist in rehabilitation, and reduce the likelihood of injury and re-injury. The cognitive as well as the physical aspects are stressed.

Week 8: Competition Preparation and Competition Routine: providing participants with strategies to allow them to prepare optimally for competition; developing competition strategies relevant to each participant's performance. A special feature is role playing "what if" situations.

Competencies/Expected Learning Outcomes

Participation in this course results in the acquisition of a range of basic cognitive behavioural intervention techniques designed to improve performance and build self-confidence. The techniques mastered, applicable to both sport and life in general, include relaxation, goal setting, imaging, positive thinking, developing a positive attitude and stress management

Assessment Criteria, Methods and Tasks

The tailor-made resource book incorporates self-assessment sheets for each topic.

Reporting/Certification

CAE provides a certificate for those who attend and complete the course. This course certificate provides recognition of prior learning (RPL) in the form of documentary evidence should that be required in future study or employment situations.

Accreditation status

At the time of writing in April 1995, this course is not accredited nor registered for accreditation. The CAE program co-ordinator indicated that accreditation is a possible consideration for the future.

CBT/CBL Compatibility

Whilst increased competence is the key aim of the course, the course curriculum document is not written according to any particular systemic CBT format. However, conversion to such a format could be seen as a natural next step.

Pathways

Many students choose this course as an introduction or stepping stone for physical education and fitness leadership courses. Many have enhanced their employment prospects.

Evaluation

The two most common techniques employed are:

- planned review sessions that occur at regular intervals throughout the course so students can discuss the progress of the course
- an evaluation sheet that is posted to participants immediately following their completion of the course on which they can register their assessments of the course.

Good Practice Criteria

Why

Individual fulfilment: ✓
Material sufficiency: ✓
Cultural belongingness: ✓
Social justice:
National wealth ✓
Global awareness:

What

Wisdom, not just information: ✓
Bodies of knowledge, not just facts: ✓
Crafts, not just skills:
Sensitivity, not just behavioural acts: ✓
Values, not just attitudes: ✓
Rigorous thinking, not just flexibility: ✓

Social contextualizing: ✓
Inclusiveness-perspectives, content, practitioners: ✓
Demystification: ✓
Community development: ✓

Multi-discursiveness: ✓
Innovation in response to socio-economic changes: ✓

How

Fosters empowerment/co-existence/enablement: ✓
In whose interests?: ✓
Self-direction & autonomy and co-operation & community: ✓
Student involvement-decision-making & on-going evaluation: ✓
Compatibility between publicity and learning taking place: ✓
Sufficient, fair, valid, reliable assessments: ✓
Recognition of prior learning: ✓

Student Profile

Reasons for enrolling

- To help improve the sporting performance of self and others, for example, grandchildren, clients, team members
- To learn how to apply practical psychological strategies to exercise programs, training, competition and injury recovery.

Reasons for enrolling now

Course participants are keen to try out the theories and ideas that they have heard of or read about but have never had the chance to practise in a systematic way with someone experienced.

Age/Life Stage

17-80+, from recent school-leavers to retired grandparents.

Gender

On average, 65% men and 35% women.

Ethnicity and Cultural background

Most cultural backgrounds, excepting Asian.

Language

All students have displayed competence in speaking, reading and writing English.

Educational background

The full range of educational backgrounds has been represented, from early school-leavers to University graduates.

Occupation

Some are unemployed, but the majority are in paid employment as health professionals (eg doctors, physiotherapists) or sports professionals (eg coaches), as well as in a wide range of other occupations, such as the public service.

Income

A very wide range has been represented.

Residence

Participants come from a mixture of inner urban, suburban and outer suburban locations.

Vocational issues

This course has proven itself to be occupationally popular, relevant and useful, especially for physical education lecturers, coaches and para-medics such as physiotherapists.

Administration and Resources

Provider

Council of Adult Education (CAE)

Address

256 Flinders St, Melbourne. 3000

Fax

(03) 9654 6759

Contact

Susan Reidy, Community Programs, CAE

Policy factors

This course relates to policies that promote the multi-skilling of performing artists, coaches and para-medical professionals.

Funding source

Self-funding through fee-paying.

Cost to student

$127 per course, Concession $81, Senior Card $110.

Staffing

1 Tutor (Paulette Mifsud)
CAE administrative support.

Equipment and facilities

Overhead projector, video machine, audiotape recorder.

Texts

(1) A take-home, tutor-produced workbook that contains separate information sheets on each of the topics covered in the course. This text follows the same format for each of the eight weekly topics - a definition of the *key principles* related to that topic; *applied examples* of those principles; and *activities* enabling students to apply and practise the principles in their own lives. This resource book includes plenty of space and opportunities for students to record their own goals, tasks and progress.
(2) A tutor-prepared "Further Reading" reference list.

Physical constraints and solutions

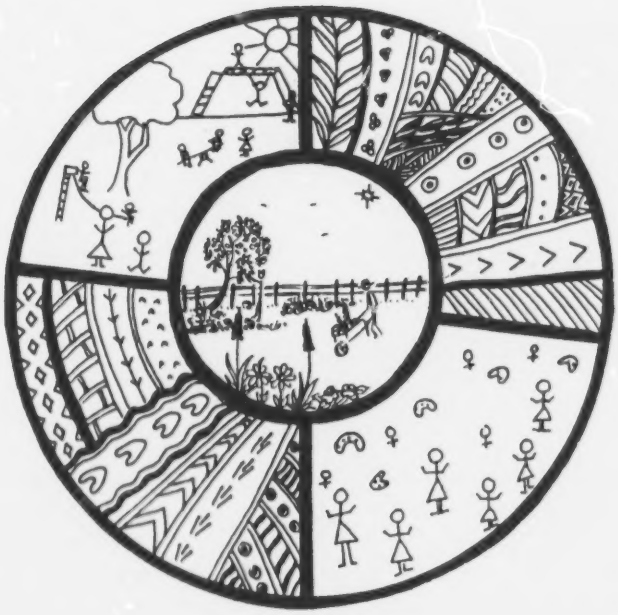
Interference from outside noise such as students learning piano in a nearby room provide a perfect occasion for students to practise focussing techniques.

Copyright

The tutor holds copyright on the course materials.

HORTICULTURE

Creswick Community Centre



"Live life to the fullest. Keep tasting and touching. Keep stimulating all the receptors of the human body - the eyes, the ears, the hands, the muscles and the tastes."

"Co-ordination - a collaborative affair"

This Horticulture course offered by the Community Centre in rural Creswick demonstrates powerfully the close connection between the quality of course co-ordination and the quality of course outcomes. In fact, it is tempting to say that, for courses similar to the Creswick Community Centre (CCC) horticulture course, success is almost impossible without course co-ordination, however small the number of hours involved.

The course co-ordinator's role is a multi-faceted, multi-skilled one that goes far beyond producing a one-off curriculum design on paper. It involves publicising the course, running information sessions, conducting the initial interviews, selecting suitable course participants, selecting suitable teaching staff, organising administrative support, assisting with the organisation of excursions and field days, helping the students and tutoring staff to settle in and continuing to provide on-going, reliable and readily available support, regularly evaluating the course and finally, making any necessary revisions for future courses.

Students lacking in confidence or returning to study after a long break or with unhappy memories of earlier "school" experiences have lots of questions and mixed feelings about their own capacities or suitability. Finding a familiar face, the same familiar face, at each stage of the returning to study process increases the likelihood of students staying and succeeding. This work emerges as particularly important in a course that ranges over so many different subject areas, each requiring a specialist tutor, as this course does.

Whilst the classes in permaculture, organic small farming, native plants and grasses, hydroponics, equipment maintenance, outdoor furniture design and small business development all make for an educationally robust course, it does mean that there are a lot of different staff coming and going. The course co-ordinator is the one consistent thread, the one person available to staff and students from beginning to end, the only person with a complete overview of the whole curriculum, the only one in a position to know whether the course is achieving its aims and whether modifications need to be made. Noting the role of co-ordination is not to diminish or underestimate the significant effect of each individual teacher but rather to stress the importance of the course being an educationally consistent and coherent one.

The horticulture course co-ordinator at Creswick Community Centre believes that this daily, on-the-spot availability, this "credibility through visibility", is absolutely essential to the undisputed success of this multi-disciplinary course. Knowing the importance of detecting or diffusing problems early on, he lives out his motto; "You can't co-ordinate from afar or from behind a desk: you have to be on hand at all times. The course may have run before, but it's all new for each new group that comes, and each new group needs different forms of educational and vocational and personal support."

This continuity of purpose, this educational coherence and this accessibility of support have resulted in consistently high-quality educational and vocational outcomes for the students directly involved in the course. Existing skills have been enhanced, new skills developed, chances of employment and further education and

training capacities improved. But there have been other long-term positive outcomes, ones that benefit the community in general as well as individual course participants in particular.

These positives are clearly seen in the following achievements: the opportunities that have emerged for students to tutor on subsequent horticulture programs; the many strong networks and links that have developed between students and other horticulturalists; the fact that the CCC has established an infrastructure comprising potting shed, igloo, shade house and training garden, all of which are well used by course participants subsequent to course completion; the many participants who have developed a sense of ownership of the community Centre; the "Greenthumbs", a group of isolated rural women graduates from the course who have formed a team to play tennis together every week, an on-going outcome that means regular communication and encouragement to set new goals which might not otherwise exist; and the improvement in profile of the CCC due to the consistent and competent efforts of the course participants, both during the course and afterwards, through their horticultural work in the community.

It is the co-ordinator's overall knowledge, local know-how and on-going contact that have made this community development and employment generation possible, that has made this the extremely effective multi-purpose adult education course that it is.

It is the multi-dimensional nature of this course, consciously planned and skilfully provided by highly-regarded tutors, that gives this horticulture course such a high standing in the local community. Tutors, carefully chosen to meet the wide-ranging curriculum objectives, work and live in the local community and are seen to practise what they teach. Such concerted combined effort makes the course notable in the district, and it is the course co-ordinator who ensures that each contributor knows his/her part in this multi-person endeavour, who ensures that the course proceeds smoothly and harmoniously, both conceptually and practically, without student "casualties".

There is another matter related to course co-ordination that provides a marvellous illustration of the significance of this non-classroom co-ordination role to the achievement of the curriculum aims and expected outcomes. That is the matter of child care. Given the desire to attract and involve as many women participants as possible, especially isolated rural women, child care is obviously a key issue. Classes are organised within school hours for this reason. However, there is still the matter of pre-school children. Whilst young children can join in some practical work and field trips, special arrangements have to be made while their parents are in class to allow them to attend without anxiety.

The roving course co-ordinator is best situated to notice potential barriers or deterrents such as this, and to take the necessary steps that will remove any obstacles that interfere with the fulfilment of the aims and objectives of the curriculum. It is this ever-vigilant attention to detail, noting omissions, recording suggestions, making connections, that gives this course the substance and integrity for which it is locally famous.

Whilst this detailed account might sound as if it's the course co-ordinator doing most of the work, a glance at the topic-rich course content makes it abundantly clear how much the dozen or so subject specialists contribute. In fact, from the students' point of view, they are the course. Whilst the course co-ordinator's role simply cannot be

classified and measured in student contact hours, in the way this is conventionally understood, it is important to keep the co-ordination role in perspective, remembering that it constitutes but a very small percentage of the total 400 class contact hours. On average, half a day a week. It is most definitely a case where a little means a lot.

The special features of the Horticulture course are well encapsulated in the concept of CO-ORDINATION. This adult education course admirably demonstrates this aspect of Good Practice Curriculum in action because it:

- brings together subjects from a range of disciplines in an educationally coherent and connected way
- establishes on-going links with the life and priorities of the wider community
- ensures a consistency of approach and support for students.

Educational Characteristics

Philosophy

The course co-ordinator sees this adult education initiative, given the scope of its curriculum, as both a broad and a deep introduction to horticulture. As well, it is invaluable in developing a community resource for horticulture that benefits many more than those actually enrolled in the horticulture course.

First, it provides a place, the opportunity and the facilities for spotlighting and developing horticultural activities in the area. Second, around the non-threatening activity of gardening, it brings together members of the community who might otherwise never meet or work or have contact with each other.

In these two key ways, this course realises all the values widely considered to be the hallmark of good adult education: it is useful, measurable, specific, community-based, fair and collaborative.

Aims

Fundamentally, to provide students with a broad based Introduction to Horticulture through the provision of a series of theoretical and practical training sessions based at the Creswick Community Centre Horticulture Training Facility

Specifically, to assist local unemployed persons in the establishment of small business enterprises relating to horticulture

To provide a training and development program which will enhance pathways to employment in the horticulture field

To provide a training and development program which will equip students with a sound knowledge base for further education and training in horticulture

To provide an opportunity for students to learn and enhance personal development in a non-threatening environment

To utilise local horticultural expertise through the employment of local horticulturalists, farmers and previous students as tutors

To develop and enhance the physical attributes of the Creswick Community Centre

To foster and develop a network of local people with an interest in horticulture.

Development stage

As of May 1995, it is about to be run for the fourth time.

Length

20 weeks x 20 hours (over 3 days).

Mode

Face-to-face: ✓
1:1:
Group: ✓
Distance:
Self-access:

Prerequisites

An interest in horticulture is required: this is determined via the written application forms and selection interviews.

Content and Methodology

This course provides theoretical classroom lectures supported by practical horticultural experience. The course is based primarily at the Creswick Community Centre utilising the training room, the back yard, the greenhouse, the shade house and the potting shed. Several field trips to nurseries, private gardens, bush locations and Melbourne vegetable markets are also included in the delivery mode. A practical horticultural project (eg. landscaping, fencing, site preparation, streetscaping, park planting) occurs either at the Community Centre or at a public site.

The course outline, presented below with the aims, the content and the activities of each topic, is structured as follows:

Horticulture (100 hours): To develop an understanding of the principles of management and production of plant nurseries.
Soils, mulches, plant ID., propagation, nursery work, watering systems, pests and diseases, potting mixes, landscaping, fertilisers.

Personal Development (100 hours): To improve personal attributes and develop personal initiative, work in a team, develop an awareness of skills required for chosen occupations, write a personal resume, present confidently at job interviews.
Communication skills, confidence and self esteem development, public speaking, resume writing, debating, abseiling, bush walking, letter writing, group work.

Permaculture (16 hours): To gain an understanding of permaculture design principles and operations.
Principles and practices of permaculture.

Organic small farming (48 hours): To develop an understanding of the principles of management and production of small scale organic farming.
Organic farming, vegetable growing, orchards, principles and practice of organic growing.

Native plants and grasses (7 hours): To gain an understanding of indigenous species of grasses and other flora in the Creswick district.
Slides, talks, discussions and bush walks focussed on local native flora.

Roses (16 hours): To gain an understanding of the principles and practices of growing roses.
Growing and maintaining roses.

Herb farming (16 hours): To gain an understanding of the range of cottage industry opportunities available in herb growing.
Field trips, slide presentations, tours and discussions focussed on herb growing.

Hydroponics (8 hours): To gain an understanding of the principles and practices of growing stock using hydroponics.
Field trip, tour and discussion focussed on hydroponics.

Occupational Health and Safety (21 hours): To develop an understanding of health and safety requirements and issues, to identify appropriate personal safety procedures and strategies and to adopt safe personal practices.
Safe handling of pesticides, machinery operation, manual handling, hand tool safety, skin cancer prevention, general field safety.

Small plant and equipment operation (16 hours): To safely use and maintain a variety of small machinery.
Demonstrations and practice on lawn mowers, whipper snippers, clippers, brushcutters, rotary hoes, chainsaws, spray units and other small machinery.

Wood slabbing and outdoor furniture design (16 hours): To develop skills in the design and construction of outdoor rough sawn garden tables and seats.
Demonstration and practice with portable timber mill.

Small business development (20 hours): To develop an understanding of the principles and practices of operating a successful small business, identify types of business structures, develop an understanding of the various methods of marketing, develop an individual small business plan.
Business structures, principles and practices in establishing a small business, industrial relations, business planning, marketing.

Skill-sharing and the sharing of prior knowledge are warmly encouraged, both formally (via employment as a specialist tutor) and informally (as a class contributor).

Competencies/Expected Learning Outcomes

- A knowledge of basic Horticultural practices
- A knowledge of small business development requirements
- A basic knowledge of Occupational Health and Safety practices
- Improved skills in applying theoretical Horticultural and Small Business knowledge to practical tasks
- A knowledge of employment options in the Horticultural Industry
- A knowledge of further training options in the Horticultural field
- An improved degree of interpersonal skills
- An extensive network of persons and resources related to the Horticulture Industry.

Assessment Criteria, Methods andTasks

- Regular attendance
- Regular contributions, both verbal and practical, to the life of the group
- Participation in the choice and implementation of a group project to transform a specified local garden and grounds. "Before" and "after" photographs document the transformation.

Reporting and Certification

Given satisfactory attendance and participation, students who complete the course receive a Centre certificate. The course certificate provides documentary evidence (RPL) for future purposes.

Accreditation status

Currently, informal cross-credit arrangements exist with the local TAFE college, the School of Mines and Industries. The Head of Department, Rural Studies, has perused the course and indicated the benefits of establishing formal links with the Rural Studies "Advanced Certificate in Horticulture" course. The course has been approved for submittal to the School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat (SMB), Board of Studies for local accreditation. With sufficient resources and time, this submission will proceed.

CBT/CBL Compatibility

This curriculum is currently being converted to a Competency Based Training format on the model required by the School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat. The revised CBT course will include a further 20 hours comprising assessment tasks, computer and keyboarding techniques and operation, and further field trips to VCAH colleges.

Pathways

Successful completion of this course enables students to:

- seek employment in retail and wholesale nurseries, local government outdoor departments, the local broad acre farming community and small organic farms
- establish small scale business ventures, such as home nurseries, garden furniture construction, plant sales, garden maintenance and landscape design
- organise plant stalls at local markets
- be better placed to enter training courses, such as the Certificate of Occupational Studies, Horticulture, SMB Ballarat; Apprenticeship Gardening, SMB Ballarat; Advanced Certificate in Horticulture, SMB Ballarat; and various VCAH courses related to horticulture.

Evaluation

The comprehensive student questionnaire distributed at the end of each course provides the basis for the final official evaluation report prepared for the funding body, including details of student outcomes. As well, the course co-ordinator tables regular, lengthy course progress reports at the monthly CCC Management Committee meetings.

Good Practice Criteria

Why

Individual fulfilment: ✓
Material sufficiency: ✓
Cultural belongingness: ✓
Social justice: ✓
National wealth: ✓
Global awareness: ✓

What

Wisdom, not just information: ✓
Bodies of knowledge, not just facts: ✓
Crafts, not just skills: ✓
Sensitivity, not just behavioural acts: ✓
Values, not just attitudes: ✓
Rigorous thinking, not just flexibility: ✓

Social contextualizing: ✓
Inclusiveness-perspectives, content, practitioners: ✓
Demystification: ✓
Community development: ✓
Multi-discursiveness: ✓
Innovation in response to socio-economic changes:

How

Fosters empowerment/co-existence/enablement: ✓
In whose interests?: ✓
Self-direction & autonomy and co-operation & community: ✓
Student involvement-decision-making & on-going evaluation: ✓
Compatibility between publicity and learning taking place: ✓
Sufficient, fair, valid, reliable assessments: ✓
Recognition of prior learning: ✓

Student Profile

Reasons for enrolling

- To learn about horticulture, so as to improve own home gardens and/or to develop a means of income
- To understand more about the horticulture industry
- To open up pathways for further training
- To be able to start up a horticulture-related business, such as herb growing, lavender farming, produce for markets or garden furniture.

Reasons for enrolling now

A long-time desire to do something like this, the availability of the course and being currently ready and able are the reasons given by students.

Age/Life stage

16-70, from early school leavers to retired people.

Gender

The first course was all men, the second all women and the third 50/50.

Ethnicity and Cultural background

To date, all come from Anglo backgrounds, basically reflecting the cultural composition of the local community.

Language

All speak, read and write English reasonably confidently.

Educational background

A very wide range is represented.

Occupation

A significant number has previously worked in the horticultural industry, such as in nurseries or as landscape designers. Others, especially the women and youth, have not previously been in paid employment.

Income

Participants represent a wide range of incomes, with a significant number on low incomes, including those receiving government pensions.

Residence

All students live in rural or rural isolated areas.

Vocational issues

Gaining employment is a fairly high priority for all the participants: this course introduces the vocational options available, and enables students to decide what they want or can do.

Other

Rehabilitation clients are often referred as a first step back into the wider community. The "specialist" days, on topics such as roses and hydroponics, are opened up to the general public to introduce a wider group to the core horticultural group and to the Centre's horticultural facilities.

Administration and Resources

Provider

Creswick Community Centre (CCC)

Address:

19-21 Victoria St, Creswick, 3363

Fax

Nil

Contact

Until May, 1995: Warren Peart, Course Co-ordinator
As of June, 1995: Liz Spriggs, Course Co-ordinator

Policy factors

This course is especially designed to encourage and cater for isolated rural women and unemployed youth.

Funding sources

Commonwealth Growth Funds, distributed through the local Central Highlands/ Wimmera Adult and Community Education (ACFE) Regional Office.

Cost to student

Nil, except for basic materials, such as gloves, and travel costs.

Staffing

1 Course Co-ordinator
1 Horticulture Tutor (100 hours)
1 Personal Development Tutor (100 hours)
12+ sessional tutors in specialist areas of horticulture, health and safety, small business development, and equipment use and maintenance (7-48 hours).

Equipment and facilities

Plenty of outdoor space, including a garden and a big paddock out the back; an integrated facilities infrastructure that has been built up over time, including a shade house, a hothouse and a potting shed; a lockable training room, where work and resources can be safely stored; gardening and building tools. Pots, seeds and cuttings are generally donated by the local community.

Texts

The set of course references, a compilation of both tutor-produced and ready-made notes, provides a useful reference text for future use.

Physical constraints and solutions

The gradual acquisition of an infrastructure of facilities has enabled the course to broaden its scope. Any "problem" in a garden or grounds, whether at the Centre or elsewhere in the local community, provides a perfect opportunity for course project work, for redesigning and repairing the neglected space.

APPENDICES

Criteria for Good Practice Adult Education Curriculum

Introduction

Curriculum, education in practice, the dynamic interaction between adult educator and learner, can be thought of as the heart of education, a living force that keeps the lifeblood of education flowing. Being located precisely where all the forces and factors that want to have a say in education intersect, it occupies a highly influential position in any discussion on adult education priorities and practices.

Curriculum, being of primary significance, is powerful in its consequences. Being the site where learning is determined, the curriculum can make or break the expectations and hopes of all the so-called stakeholders in education, of all those claiming some degree of ownership over it. Students, teachers, employers, dispensers of funds, policy makers and policy monitors, community activists and government accountants all depend on it to achieve their goals. No amount of money, space, facilities, equipment or fine words can make adult and community education come to life on their own: while they provide important, supportive structures, it is the curriculum that is central to what is learnt. In other words, it is the curriculum, and clarity about purposes, content, methods and outcomes, that converts policy documents, position papers, committee decisions, lists of competencies, how to do it guidelines and funding guidelines into action.

Given its centrality of position and the power of its influence, certain questions automatically spring to mind: "What is 'good practice' curriculum? What are its hallmarks? Who says so? And whose voice, whose authority, counts?" A consideration of these questions, with an attempt at some answers, is the focus of this paper.

It is important, from the outset, to distinguish between "good practice" and any one educational theory, school of thought or policy imperative. Within <u>any</u> educational approach, be that humanistic education, education for social change or competency based vocational education and training, there is "good" and "bad". It is the evidence of quality, not simply the label or what it is called, that decides if it is "good practice" or not. In other words, "good practice" is neither restricted to, nor necessarily assured by, any one particular educational philosophy or ideology. To locate "good practice" requires going beyond the labels, means looking beneath the surface, to see if the practice achieves what the curriculum description promises. So this paper is also an attempt to provide guidance in such evaluations.

All human activities, all social interactions, all educational practices carry within them a view of the way life could or should be. Every text, every group event, every social act embodies within it, whether the participants are conscious of it or not, a picture of a preferred world.

In relation to this project, therefore, the key questions about any curriculum emerge as:

what is the curriculum trying to achieve?
what contribution to human life is it intending to make?
what sort of society is it constructing?
who's to say if this is "good" or not?
who's to judge the worth of the value system that it embodies?
who has the final say?
whose say doesn't count?

The question of good

These are not simple questions. They are questions that force us to identify the values inherent in any particular example of adult education curriculum, to determine whether we see them as "good" values, to analyse them in relation to other possible "goods", to decide whether some "goods" are better than others and to justify those decisions. In other words, "good" is an ethically and politically loaded concept, a heavily value-laden term, with as many definitions as there are people and positions.

So, determining criteria for "good practice" comes down to describing which visions of individual and social "good" are the most desirable ones and which adult education practices realise those "goods". This means it is not possible to talk exclusively about methodology, the "how"; it means that it is imperative to talk also of the philosophy, the "why". Practice cannot be considered as if it is separate from theory: it is the living expression of theory. So the first question to consider is: which theories of adult and community education do we designate as the "good" ones?

If everyday reference books are to be the arbiter on this matter, if they are to be our source for defining "good practice", then according to the thesaurus Word for Word the theories will have to be all or some of the following "acceptable, capital, commendable, fine, first-rate, great, pleasing, satisfactory, valuable, worthy; fair, halcyon, pleasant, sunny; admirable, beneficent, benevolent, charitable, estimable, humane, honourable, kindly, praiseworthy, upright, virtuous; dutiful, mannerly, obedient, polite, proper, well-behaved; agreeable, congenial, convivial, enjoyable, gratifying; authentic, bona fide, genuine, legitimate, real, true, valid; accomplished, adept, adroit, clever, competent, dexterous, efficient, expert, proficient, skilled, useful; advantageous, beneficial, favourable, helpful, opportune, propitious, healthy, salubrious, sound, untainted, wholesome; adequate, ample, considerable, extensive, large, long, solid and substantial" (p. 156).

This catalogue of adjectives, whilst telling us what "good" could be, doesn't tell us what "good" does or looks like in a particular place at a particular time. Is it even possible to have "all this goodness" in practice in the one place at the one time? Obviously, dictionaries are not the place to look for an answer to the question "what is good practice"? It is more appropriate to turn to educational thinkers.

Main adult education theories

To answer any question connected with good practice requires a consideration of theories put forward as the raison d'etre for adult and community education. A reading of the documents listed in the attached bibliography (See Appendix E) suggests at least four main currents of thinking in the last decade. Each alternative differs not only in its definition of learning but also in its view of the role of the educator, the role of the student and the ultimate purpose of it all. Each theory, each

philosophy, expresses or embodies its own ethical and political priorities, though not always explicitly.

The **first** theory could be called the "Efficiency" theory. It sees learning as an observed change in behaviour, as demonstrable progress through increasingly more complex cognitive stages, as clear mastery of hierarchically organised skills, achieved via a pre-programmed syllabus, managed predominantly by a person in charge, often called a "trainer" who may be removed physically from the site of learning. This cultural transmission theory tends to accept cultural "givens", seeing its responsibility as reinforcing the status quo values, norms, rules, knowledge and skills of the dominant authorities.

The **second** theory could be called the "Self-Direction" theory. It sees learning as the continuous accumulation of new insights. It is the individual learner who is predominantly responsible for planning and assessing his or her own learning pathway, determining not only what to learn, but how to learn it and how to measure success. In this process, in which the individual's stated goals and not some outside reference point is the final arbiter, the facilitator acts as a resource person. Above all else, this andragogic approach prizes the individual adult's liberty to choose.

The **third** theory, allied to the second in some ways, could be called the "Learner- or Student-Centredness" theory. It sees learning as personal growth, self-actualisation, self-development. The facilitator is responsible for creating caring, supportive groups that minimise internal barriers to learning, that promote the unique emotional and intellectual flowering of each individual. This humanistic theory values what comes from within, believing all humans have a unique, in-built pattern which should be allowed to unfold naturally. It is the responsibility of adult education to remove all impediments to this self-fulfilment.

The **fourth** theory could be called the "Critical Analysis and Social Action" theory. It sees learning as the product and producer of social and political actions, as what comes from the creative and dynamic interaction between the individual and society. The educator, always a learner as well, encourages a collective culture of dialogue and questioning. Together educator and student identify community needs and learners' capacities to participate, and together they plan appropriate collective action. This theory advocates the problematization and critiquing of culture and society, believing it is the responsibility of adult education to achieve social and political justice for the common good.

So, deciding which adult education practices to recognise as "good" practices forces us to decide which ultimate "good", which theory or theories, is the most desirable. Of course, in most adult and community education settings, boundaries blur, and many hybrid forms of the four theories mentioned are evident. Each setting illustrates its own local blend. This is the result of wave after wave of theory and changing government education and training policies washing over adult education in the last twenty or thirty years, each leaving slightly different traces and configurations in different places.

An important principle that emerges to guide us in determining the criteria of "good" practice, therefore, is an acknowledgment of the philosophical diversity of adult education practices in Victoria today, an acknowledgment of the range of justifiably

good educational practices that have evolved to suit particular social and cultural situations in particular historical circumstances. This paper certainly acknowledges that all adult education practices must be seen in the context of the policies, funds, physical constraints and dominant ideologies that shape them at the time.
There is a second principle, however, that takes precedence over this one because it is ethical rather than historical in nature. It is arguably even more important in choosing criteria for "good practice" because it is primarily concerned about what educational practice achieves the greatest good for the greatest number. In other words, "good practice" comes to mean an ethos which situates the matter of individual rights within the broader context of the collective good. For this principle, educational inputs, processes and outcomes are born from a commitment to an ethos that sees the individual good and the social good as desirably interdependent factors and not as polarised opposites in competition with each other.

GOOD PRACTICE CRITERIA

This paper proposes the following purpose as the fundamental criterion from which all subsequent criteria to do with good practice adult education curriculum spring:

Purpose/Why

The curriculum is intended to construct both individual and social well-being, or more explicitly, it is designed to contribute simultaneously to individual fulfillment, material sufficiency, cultural belongingness, social justice, national wealth and global awareness.

This over-arching fundamental **why** criterion ("the good"/the purpose) automatically, then, generates criteria about **what** (content), about **how** (methodology), about **who** (learners) and about **where** (site). What follows, an elaboration on these matters, is an attempt to avoid the reductive over-simplification that is inevitable with the fragmented format of an all-in-one checklist. Instead, it tries to hint at some of the recurring clusters and patterns to be found in the densely textured nature of the best adult and community education curriculum practice.

Content/What

Some of the characteristics of **what**, be that adult basic education, general or liberal education, vocationally oriented education or public education, could be summarised as content dedicated to developing:

- **wisdom, not just information**
- **bodies of knowledge, not just facts**
- **crafts, not just skills**
- **sensitivity not just behavioural acts**
- **values, not just attitudes**
- **rigorous thinking, not just flexibility.**

Such comprehensive curriculum necessarily demands **content** that:

- places learning squarely in a social, cultural and political context
- is thoroughly inclusive, knowingly incorporating the multiple perspectives that individuals bring to any learning situation as a result of gender, ethnicity, class, age, sexuality and/or physical abilities
- demystifies knowledges and institutions
- chooses anti-sexist, anti-racist content, role models and practitioners
- embodies the concept of community, not seeing education merely as a commercial exchange between individual buyers and suppliers

- presents knowledge in breadth and depth, being made up of many discourses
- is multi-discursive and multi-dimensional, enacting a "*saying-writing-doing-being-valuing-believing combination*" (Gee, p 142)
- is innovative in response to socio-economic changes.

Methodology/How

Some of the characteristics of **how**, be that face-to-face, one to one, in a group, distance mode or self-access, could be summarised as:

- **fostering empowerment and a full democratic participation in educational life through educational practices that actively work to challenge and prevent exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence.**

Such comprehensive and inclusive curriculum demands educator-learner **methods** that:

- favour co-operation rather than competition in teaching methodology
- examine the values and power relationships within educational structures and identify whose interests (students? teachers? institutions? funding bodies?..) are being served, in what priority order and why
- develop processes that value and use "*differences and similarities between individuals and groups as a basis for co-existence and enablement rather than for oppression and domination*" (Shore, p 11)
- encourage both self-direction/autonomy **and** cooperation/community, not forcing an either/or choice
- recognise and draw on participants' prior learning, involving learners in educational decision-making and on-going evaluation
- model active learning techniques that practise what the program preaches
- ensure compatibility between the description of the program and processes promised prior to the event and the actual learning experiences that take place
- draw on sufficient, authentic evidence of learning to ensure fair, useful, valid and reliable assessments.

The learners/Who

Any collection of case studies of "good practice" should portray in what way the **why, what and how sketched above** represent themselves in the vast range of learners who constitute adult and community education. Regarding **who,** a collection should include, and make conscious reference to, the wide range of adult learners in community settings. Special mention should be made of the infinite number of variations concerning such factors as:

- employment status
- age
- area of residence
- income
- gender
- ethnicity
- race
- social class
- physical and other abilities
- language abilities
- educational background
- goals
- learner readiness
- reasons for participation at this particular time.

The sites/Where

Similarly, regarding **where**, it is equally essential that the diversity of sites and settings, the locations in which the why, what and how take place, be highlighted. Attention must be drawn to this diversity, making sure a range of mix-and-match from the following columns are included:

provincial	neighbourhood houses	schools
suburban/urban	community organisations	workplaces
rural isolated	adult education institutions	community facilities.

Conclusion

The main point being made in this proposal is that the **why** of curriculum, given its all-pervasive influence, deserves primacy of place. As everything else - the what, the how, the who and/or the where - are determined by the **why**, it is the key determinant of what makes for good practice. If the why is narrow and shallow, so too will be the inputs, the processes and the outcomes. If the why is broad and deep, so too will be the inputs, the process and the outcomes. In many documents on curriculum, the who, the where, and less often, the how, feature prominently, sometimes even exclusively. Many seem to ignore the "why". For all the reasons cited, this paper proposes that it is vital that the "why", the philosophical and ethical justification, is given its rightful place of honour in discussions and decisions about good practice adult education curriculum.

A final word needs to be said about the significant and complex issue of "whose say-so counts", about who ultimately determines the "why", a matter foreshadowed in the last two questions at the very beginning of this paper. It goes without saying that a number of "stakeholders" or "owners" can be, and are, involved in both the definition of Why and in the determination of Success. In other words, a lot of people have a stake in deciding the aims and in making judgments about the outcomes.

In different contexts, the "stakeholders" will be one or all of the following - the student, the teacher, the educational organisation, one or more funding bodies, one or more government agencies, the employer, one or more unions, an educational partner. In this complex situation where accountability is multifold, whose word carries most weight, who ultimately decides what counts as "good practice"? Or, put slightly differently, is there a hierarchy of stakeholders? Whose voice presides if there is a conflict of interests?

These questions are raised, not only because individual adult educators have to struggle with them on a day-to-day basis, but because these issues, issues of ownership and accountability, are arguably the most complex and critical ones facing adult and community education practice as a field today. So, they cannot be ignored.

If we are to follow the spirit of this paper, in which adult education good practice means contributing to both individual and social well-being, simultaneously attending to vocational, personal, family, community and social goals and outcomes, then good practice simply has to include judicious attentiveness to the claims, needs and demands of all the stakeholders. In the final analysis, when the choice is made between all the contending stakeholders, this paper concludes that it is imperative that those making the choice can clearly justify, on ethical and philosophical grounds as well as on historical and political ones, the particular conglomeration of interests favoured. It is the intention of this paper to give a more explicit and cogent language for doing this.

Spread/Range/Mix of ACE Case Studies Matrix

Range/Spread/Mix of Case Studies Matrix

Learners/ Modes/ Credit Type of Course	Koorie Learners	Rural Learners	Disabled Learners	Women Learners	NESB Learners	Youth Learners/ Older Learners	Un-employed Learners	Details of other Learners	Work-place Delivery	Flexible Delivery	Details of other Modes	RPL Cross-Credit	CBT: Systemic	FE Accredit-ation
ALBE														
ESL														
Tertiary/ Vocational Education Preparatory														
Access														
General/ Liberal Recreation														
Community Develop-ment														

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Organising Principles for Choice of Case Studies

- There is to be a ***MIX, RANGE and BREADTH*** of examples with regard to adult learners, learning modes and course types
- Examples are to represent THE LIFE SPAN OF A COURSE from its early stages to maturity
- Examples are to provide A RANGE OF BLENDS WITH REGARD TO OWNERSHIP and ACCOUNTABILITY, be that to the students, funding bodies, the community, government agencies, the practitioners and/or other stakeholders
- Examples are to represent A RANGE OF different blends / emphases/ integratedness of the project's good practice criteria, a range that exemplifies DIFFERENT DEGREES OF MULTI-PURPOSE and MULTI-DISCIPLINARY PRACTICE, that exemplifies varying combinations of the WHY, WHAT, and HOW mentioned in those criteria
- Examples are to represent *THE HUMAN LIFE SPAN OF LEARNING* from school-leaver to elder
- Examples might provide **10 RESPONSES, SOLUTIONS or VARIATIONS ON THE ONE NEED, PROBLEM or THEME** (e.g. health, or the environment, or five examples of 2 themes, or some other permutation)
- Examples are to demonstrate ***A SPECTRUM OF COURSE INTENSITY*** regarding hours per week and duration of course
- Examples are to represent A CONTINUUM OF INSTITUTIONAL OR SYSTEMIC FORMALITY in terms of outcomes, pathways, certification and accreditation.

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